

THE CO-OPERATIVE PARTY



AN OUTLINE  
OF  
ORGANISATION



By J. BAILEY

THE CO-OPERATIVE PARTY

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# **The Co-operative Party Handbook**

## **CONTENTS**

### **PART I**

<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>Our Case in Politics</b>	<b>PAGES</b>
I	End of the Beginning .....	1-5
II	Party Policy.....	6-9
III	Affiliated Membership.....	9-10

### **PART II**

#### **How the Party is Governed**

I	National and Executive Committees.....	11-13
II	The Co-operative Union, Ltd. ....	13-15
III	Other National Co-operative Organisations.....	15-18
IV	National Council of Labour .....	18-19

### **PART III**

#### **How the Party is Organised**

I	First Steps. ....	20
II	The Constitution .....	21-24
III	Constitution, Section A .....	25-26
IV	"      "      B.....	26-28
V	"      "      C .....	28-30
VI	Relations with Co-operative Auxiliaries .....	30
VII	Finance of Local Parties.....	31-32
VIII	Voluntary Parties and Federations. ....	32-33

### **PART IV**

#### **The Local Party**

I	How to Form a Society Party.....	34-36
II	The Executive Committee.....	37-38
III	The Society Party Meeting.....	38-40

## PART V

CHAPTER	Duties of Officials	PAGES
I	Chairman and Vice-Chairman.....	41-43
II	Secretary .....	43-47
III	Treasurer.....	47-51
IV	Auditor .....	51-52

## PART VI

### Getting to Work

I	Public Meetings .....	53-58
II	Constituency Parties and Branches.....	58-61
III	Education. ....	61-62
IV	Youth.....	62-63
V	Agreements with Other Bodies.....	63-65
VI	The Work of Federations .....	65-67
VII	Annual Conferences.....	67-70
VIII	Party Summer School.....	71

## PART VII

### Elections

I	Selection of Parliamentary Candidates.....	72-73
II	Finance of Candidature.....	73-74
III	Running a Parliamentary Election.....	75-77
IV	Local Government Elections .....	78-80
V	Registration of Electors.....	80-81
VI	Elected Persons .....	82

## PART VIII

I	Draft Standing Orders .....	83-85
II	The Party Must Develop .....	86-87



# PART I.

## Our Case in Politics

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### CHAPTER I.

#### END OF THE BEGINNING

Many years before the Co-operative Congress finally decided upon political action, resolutions in favour of direct co-operative Parliamentary Representation had been carried by Congress. So far back as in 1897 a resolution of Congress declared :—

“ That this Congress feels that the time has arrived for the direct representation of the Co-operative Movement in Parliament and other councils of the United Kingdom, and instructs the Co-operative Union, with the co-operation of the English and Scottish Wholesale Societies, to take steps for that purpose.”

It was not until 1917, however, that decisive action was taken to satisfy the long felt need for direct political representation.

#### NEUTRALITY IN POLITICS

The Rochdale Pioneers had lived in a relatively free economic world, where anyone who possessed the necessary capital could start a business of his own. Competition in the production and marketing of goods was at that time encouraged ; and opinion was setting against all measures which favoured one form of enterprise or industry at the expense of another. Government was looked upon as the referee, not as the goalkeeper for competitive capitalism. Co-operative Societies entered the economic field in days of free competition. Co-operative leaders believed that their Movement would demonstrate to all men of goodwill the superiority of co-operative principles over capitalist principles. All they required was freedom to operate. They did not wish to interfere in the affairs of the state, nor to be prevented by the

state from doing their own job. Co-operators might, as individual citizens, play a part as members of a political organisation, but the Co-operative Movement, as such, had no wish to "meddle in politics." It was and should remain politically neutral. That attitude was quite reasonable in those days.

### NEUTRAL FOR TOO LONG !

During the great war 1914-18 the Government had to organise the production and distribution of goods for the whole nation. Leaders of industry, commerce, and finance, were called into the service of the state and in some cases appointed as the heads of new ministries or new Government departments. The decisions of the Government on questions of food control and on the machinery of distribution were largely influenced by the advice of these leaders. Acts of Parliament and all kinds of new regulations were applied by local committees and tribunals. Here again the Government looked to organisations of traders, and to persons, most of whom were experienced in private trade, for the administration of its own measures. The Co-operative Movement was neutral in politics. It had no representation in Parliament and none on local bodies. It was therefore without any adequate means of defence when it found its rights and interests attacked through politics.

### CONGRESS REBELS

In days of food shortage, co-operative societies seemed to be in greater difficulties than the private trade ; the military service acts, as applied by local tribunals, hit societies harder than private traders, while new taxation robbed societies of their funds. The State was not a neutral ; it had taken sides with the opponents of the Co-operative Movement. That was the co-operative view when Congress met at Swansea in 1917 and by a majority of about 10-1 (1,979-201) decided in favour of the following resolution :—

"That in the opinion of this Congress, the time has now arrived for the Co-operative Movement to take the necessary steps to secure direct representation in Parliament and on all local and administrative bodies as the only way of effectively voicing its demands and safeguarding its interests. It therefore

calls upon the Central Board of the Co-operative Union to take such steps as may be necessary to put into operation the terms of the foregoing resolution."

### FROM RESOLUTION TO PARTY

The Movement was too deeply stirred by events to lose time in giving effect to this resolution, and on 18th October, 1917, an Emergency Conference called by the Union in London, approved a scheme for the setting up of a Central Parliamentary Representation Committee. In 1918, Congress broadened the basis of representation on the Committee and called it the National Co-operative Representation Committee. Only a year later the Committee again changed its name and became The Co-operative Party.

### A CONSUMER PARTY

From 1918 up to the outbreak of war in 1939, in this country every Government had made some attempt to reorganise sections of our economic system. Coal, transport, electricity, agriculture, marketing and importation of goods, were in one way or other "rationalised." State subsidies, protective tariffs, quotas upon imported goods, compulsory marketing schemes and other devices were introduced by governments in an attempt to re-organise a badly working economic system. Many of these schemes restricted the consumers' choice of goods, and increased prices. Each industry was regarded as a separate profit-making interest, and government schemes largely disregarded the rights of consumers for whose service all goods should be produced.

### CO-OPERATORS KNOW !

The Co-operative Movement is a voluntary association mainly of consumers. Its approach to economic problems was therefore in sharp contrast to that of most post-war governments. In the course of its development it has gained a vast experience of business organisation and procedure. Retail co-operative societies cover the provision of almost every type of commodity used in the homes of the people. Their activities are affected by every act of Parliament concerned with domestic commodities. Everything which increases or decreases the purchasing power of consumers affects the demand for the goods they supply and manufacture

The Co-operative Wholesale Societies are interested in building, farming, shipping, manufacturing, wholesaling, and transport of goods. Other co-operative productive organisations are also engaged in the manufacture of boots and shoes, clothing, and other articles. The Co-operative Insurance Society does many kinds of insurance business.

### A UNIQUE MOVEMENT

Taken throughout, the Co-operative Movement has a great experience in business matters. But it is unique in being at the same time :—

- (a) A Consumer's Organisation.
- (b) A Voluntary Association.
- (c) A democratically owned and controlled organisation.
- (d) An organisation with open membership.

No other business organisation operating in the country combines these four characteristics, and the Co-operative Movement has therefore a quite exceptional experience of economic organisation.

In most towns, co-operative societies know something of land values since they buy and sell sites in the course of their business. They build halls, offices, warehouses, and shops ; they lead the way in the treatment and hygienic handling of milk and provide many semi-social services, e.g., collective life assurance and education, for their members. No organisation, beginning with the individual consumer, has done so much to apply democratic principles to business.

Coal is produced in a co-operative colliery, shirts and furniture are produced in co-operative factories as the direct outcome of consumer demand and control.

### ALL TOGETHER

Producer organisations represent a special type of interest. The trade unions organise men and women as textile workers, miners, bus-drivers, dockers, &c., but the Co-operative Movement organises them all as consumers. The Co-operative Movement brings together an enormous variety of special interests, regardless of colour or creed, occupation or class,



and organises them upon the common basis of their needs as consumers. When Mr. and Mrs. John Smith join the "Co-op.," they become part owners not only of their local society, but of the C.W.S. factories which supply it with goods, and they help to control every process from counter to factory and in some cases own the sources of raw materials. There are unified ownership and control throughout. In private enterprise the owners of raw material, the owners of factories and the owners of retail shops may be different persons organised in different companies. They have no common interest to bind them except a desire to make profits, if necessary at the expense of each other. This quite often results in economic war and disorganisation, including unemployment. Co-operative societies unify ownership and control.

## ECONOMICS OF CO-OPERATION

All this is of enormous importance. The Co-operative Movement looks at business problems through the eyes of the consumer. It sees selling and buying, retailing, and wholesaling, transport and finance as one process which should be governed by the needs of the consumer and run in his service. Pre-war governments ignored this vital principle and by organising each branch of production and distribution as a separate profit-making concern, largely controlled by producer-capitalists removed it even further from consumer influence.

The Co-operative Party expresses in politics the economic, social and democratic principles of the Co-operative Movement. Its angle of approach to international and national problems is the result of its special experience as a great democratic business organisation. It, therefore, has behind it a unique type of experience, and its function and influence in politics are of a special kind. The principal economic problems of mankind are due to the failure to make consumption power equal to production power. It is precisely at the point where this problem exists that the Co-operative Movement is operating. If co-operators withheld their own special experience from politics they would contribute nothing. Unity of democratic effort is best achieved when each branch of democracy contributes its own quota of knowledge and experience to the whole. Other organisations are required to play their part, but co-operators must play theirs too.

## CHAPTER 11.

**PARTY POLICY**

The policy of the Co-operative Party is determined by the Annual Party Conference and finally by the Co-operative Union Congress. It may thus be summed up:—

- (1) A World Association of States and Peoples to utilise the world's resources for the service of mankind.
- (2) Planned collective ownership of the main sources of power, economic and political—land, raw materials, transport, including aviation, power, fuel, finance, etc.
- (3) The encouragement and development of free associations of producers and consumers to ensure that the powers of mankind are freely used in the service of mankind.

In more detail the Party Proposes :—

**WORLD PEACE**

Economic Co-operation between nations is an essential condition of world peace. In order to secure common use of the world's resources and the observance of agreed international codes of economic behaviour, International Organisation must be created. Such an organisation is advocated as part of a World Federation of Nations.

**The World Federation** would be charged with economic, political, and other functions and would control its own International Police Force. Its powers of enforcement would be at the disposal of a re-established and strengthened International Court of Justice. Smaller Regional Federations of Nations would operate within the World Federation.

International Relief and Planning Committees for the succour and rehabilitation of stricken nations should be formed now and representation given to the People's Movements.

**REBUILDING BRITAIN**

The service of the consumer not the making of profits must be the aim of production in Post-War Britain.

Freedom from Want must be based upon a standard of living guaranteed by the State. Wages must never fall below

a national minimum. An all-in Social Security Scheme must provide for interruptions or suspension of earning power and be accompanied by a system of Family Allowances. This guaranteed standard must be the first charge upon the Nation's resources.

A National Medical and Hospital Service must be created to meet the needs of the Community.

### IMMEDIATE POST-WAR PROBLEMS

Immediate Post-War Problems can be solved only by a nation fully mobilised to attain its objectives. Commodity controls must not be abandoned in the interests of profit making.

National interests will require :—

Full maintenance of all who are willing to work ;

Guaranteed programme of work for the Constructional Industries ;

Plans for an immediate increase in supplies of raw materials ;

An order of priorities for the execution of rebuilding plans ;

Building of great new roads, docks and harbours. Controlled expansion of production of domestic essentials, accompanied by the release of purchasing power ;

A National credit policy to support expansion of production ;

A National Planning Authority, responsible to Parliament, to prepare and supervise Post-War Social and Economic Development. The distribution of industries and populations must be planned in accordance with national need.

### OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF INDUSTRY

Land, Transport, Shipping, Power, Fuel and Light must be socially owned and controlled.

Agriculture must aim at the provision of a nutritional dietary for the people. Its organisation and methods should be adjusted to that end. National Co-operative Commodity Societies should be formed to handle the products of the land.

Finance must be publicly owned and directed if it is to play its part in Post-War Reconstruction.

The main instruments of Taxation must be the Direct Tax upon personal income and resources.

### PRINCIPLES OF CONTROL

Utility undertakings in the nature of Monopolies should be operated by *democratic local administrations* upon the basis of a national plan.

The extractive industries should be controlled by special democratically constituted Boards, with provision for local administrative committees.

The Co-operative Movement provides the most efficient means of organising the production and distribution of a wide range of domestic commodities.

### EDUCATION

The Report proposes :—

Raising of the School Leaving Age.

Compulsory Provision of Nursery Infant Schools.

Secondary Education for All.

Improved School Medical Nurture and Welfare Services.

Abolition of the Dual System.

All Schools to form part of a National System.

Junior Colleges, Technical, Art and Grammar Colleges, Community Centres, Adult Education Colleges to form part of a unified and integrated system.

Better recruitment of teachers.

A Ministry of Education.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Two types of Local Government Authority are proposed :—

Regional Councils ;

Provincial Councils.

Both types to be democratically elected and to operate with clearly defined powers.



Local Government finance should be adjusted to the new structure, relieved of national charges and given new local and national sources of revenue.

## CO OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

The wide experience of the Co-operative Movement in the field of Social and Economic endeavour qualifies it to play a part in the solution of Post-War Problems. Its future in a democratic Commonwealth should be assured.

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A limited number of copies of the "Britain Reborn" pamphlets are still available and these deal in detail with the pre-war set-up of industry and the Party's programme for economic and social development.

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## CHAPTER III.

### AFFILIATED MEMBERSHIP

The Co-operative Movement in Great Britain consists of over 1,000 separate and independent co-operative societies which are governed by their own rules. After the Co-operative Congress in 1917 had passed a resolution in favour of direct parliamentary representation, and later had established a Central Political Fund, it was necessary to obtain the support of individual societies before the scheme could attain its objects. Resolutions of support, and in many cases amendments of societies' rules had to be carried at Members' Meetings before payments could be made to the political fund.

A Co-operative Society becomes "affiliated" to the Co-operative Party by subscribing to the national fund at the rate of one half-penny per annum for each member of the society. Subscriptions to the Party may, under certain conditions, be made by a society under a general rule governing the making of grants to charitable and other objects or under a rule specially designed for the purpose. In the first case a grant may be recommended by the Board of Management and confirmed by the Members' Meeting, or made by resolution of the members themselves. The second method (a separate rule) is the better since the grant is then made as a matter of course.

Usually where a Board recommendation, or a members' resolution under an existing rule is carried at a society meeting, a simple majority is sufficient.

Where the existing rules do not authorise or permit monies to be used for political purposes, an amendment to rule is necessary to obtain a grant, and in many cases such an amendment requires a two-thirds or three-fourths majority vote. As the procedure involved, is sometimes rather complicated, it is wise to consult the Head Office of the Party before going forward with either a notice of motion or an amendment to rule.

It is a mistake to assume that a method which has succeeded in one Society is necessarily applicable to another.

Subscribing societies in each section of the Co-operative Union are entitled to elect one representative to serve on the National Committee of the Party.

In addition to the retail societies, most of the National federations of the movement subscribe to the funds of the Party on a basis mutually agreed.

The "affiliated" membership of the Party has made rapid progress in recent years. In 1924 there were 393 societies with a membership of 1,835,671 affiliated, whereas in 1943, 616 societies with a membership of 7,071,226 were affiliated. From about 38 per cent. of the whole movements' membership in 1924, the Party has grown until it now has nearly 80 per cent.

## PART II.

# How the Party is Governed

### CHAPTER I.

#### NATIONAL AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

The Co-operative Party is organised as a department of the Co-operative Union Limited, under the control of a specially elected National Committee which consists of:—

- (a) Eight members of the Central Board appointed by the Central Board on a Sectional basis (one member from each Section).
- (b) Eight members representing and elected by societies contributing to the Co-operative Party Fund. These members are elected by the contributing societies in the Section they represent.

(A person who is elected a member of the Central Board of the Co-operative Union is not eligible to be elected as a representative of the societies contributing to this scheme.)

- (c) Eight members elected on a Sectional basis (one member from each Section) representing and elected by the local co-operative parties.
- (d) One representative from the Executive Committee of the Co-operative Union.
- (e) Two members representing and appointed by the Co-operative Wholesale Society.
- (f) One member representing and appointed by the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society.
- (g) One member representing and appointed by the Co-operative Productive Federation.
- (h) One member representing and appointed by the Women's Co-operative Guild (England and Wales).
- (i) One member representing and appointed by the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild.

- (j) One member representing and appointed by the National Co-operative Men's Guild.
- (k) Two members representing and appointed by the Joint Parliamentary Committee of the Co-operative Union.

The National Committee appoints a chairman and Executive Committee consisting of the Chairman and eight other persons, elected by ballot of the Committee.

In practice the National Committee meets quarterly and the Executive Committee monthly or in each case oftener if necessary.

The functions and powers of the National Committee are detailed in the Party Constitution, copies of which may be obtained from the Head Office of the Party. In effect, subject to the supervision of the Central Board and of Congress the National Committee is the Party's Board of Management.

### ADVISORY COMMITTEES

In each Section of the Co-operative Union (except the Irish) there is an Advisory Committee consisting of all members of the National Committee residing in the section. The Committee meets quarterly or oftener if necessary. It receives from the National Organiser reports of work done in the area, advises him upon his plans for future work, and considers questions referred to it by the National or Executive Committees. It is not concerned with national policy, but supervises sectional matters and submits its minutes and recommendations to the National Committee. The National Organiser acts as secretary to the Advisory Committee, and maintains contact with the Sectional Board, District Associations, and other co-operative organisations in the Section. On each Advisory Committee there will always be at least three National Committee members representing the Sectional Board, subscribing societies and local parties respectively. In addition there may be other National Committee members resident in the Section, e.g., C.W.S. or Guild representatives. The Annual Sectional Conference of Subscribing Societies is organised by the Advisory Committee. Many interviews with Boards of Management and with Committees of local parties are arranged by the Committee.



## SCOTLAND

Scotland has its own committee which is in some respects like and in others unlike the Advisory Committees in England and Wales. The Co-operative Party, Scottish Committee, as it is called, consists of three representatives from the Scottish Section of the Co-operative Union Limited, one representative from the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited, one representative from each of the eleven District Co-operative Parties (where there is no District Co-operative Party, the Conference Committee or Voluntary Party may act), four representatives elected on a national basis from Local Political Parties, one representative from the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild, one representative from the Scottish Co-operative Men's Guild, and one representative from the **Co-operative Guild of Youth**. All members of the Committee must be members of a Local Co-operative Party. The Scottish representatives on the National Committee are ex-officio members.

The Advisory Committees do not themselves raise or administer finance, but the Scottish Committee apart from an annual grant made to it by the National Committee of the Party, raises some of its own funds by levies on local organisations. The Scottish Committee holds an annual meeting of affiliated organisations at which resolutions submitted by organisations are considered. Resolutions passed are forwarded to the National Committee for appropriate action, or, by arrangement with the National Committee, to other bodies and persons.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE CO-OPERATIVE UNION LIMITED

It has been explained that the National Committee of the Party is a Committee of the Co-operative Union. The Co-operative Union Limited, is an association of "Industrial and Provident Societies, Joint Stock Companies, and other Bodies Corporate, which have for their objects the promotion of co-operative principles and ideas . . ." and covers England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. For administrative purposes the Union is divided into eight geographical sections, each under the direction of a Committee elected by societies in that section and called the Sectional Board.

In the main the Sectional Boards deal with sectional administration and advise the Executive Committee of the Co-operative Union upon section matters or questions referred to them by the Central Board or by the Executive Committee. The affairs of the Co-operative Union are governed by a Central Board which consists of all members of the Sectional Boards meeting as an aggregate body.

National administration of the Union is conducted by an Executive Committee, which consists of one member of each Sectional Board, a representative of an Irish Executive Committee which acts in Ireland for the Union, and the Chairman of the Central Board of the Union.

Each Sectional Board and the Executive Committee of the Union have one representative on the National Committee of the Party. The Co-operative Union meets certain of the Party's administrative expenses and in conjunction with the National Committee appoints the Staff of the Party.

### CONGRESS AND THE PARTY

The Central Board of the Co-operative Union organises an annual Congress to which member societies appoint delegates. Three representatives of the Party's National Committee attend. The Annual Report of the Co-operative Party, which has previously been considered in detail at the Party's Annual Conference, is included in the Report of the Central Board to Congress and is submitted for approval. Any resolutions which the Party wishes to place before Congress are first submitted to the Central Board and, if approved, appear in the name of the National Committee of the Party upon the Congress Agenda.

It will be observed, therefore, that the direction of the Union over the Party is exercised in three ways:—

- (1) The Union has direct representation on the National Committee of the Party ;
- (2) The Party is subject to the guidance of the Union Executive Committee and Central Board ;
- (3) The Party is answerable to Congress.

### UNION CONTACT IN THE SECTIONS

The Union Executive Committee and the Members of the Sectional Boards receive the minutes of the meetings of the Party's National and Executive Committees and hear reports

from their own representatives. The Sectional Board members of the National Committee, and the Union Executive Committee representative, are members of their respective Party Advisory Committee and here again receive reports of the Party's activities in the Sections. Sectional Boards assist the Party by lending their support, wherever necessary, to Party efforts in the Sections. Prior to the holding of Congress each Sectional Board holds a Conference in its Section to present a report of its own work. Reference is made in this Report to the work of the Party and the Sectional Board member of the National Committee may be called upon to give an account of his stewardship.

The support of the Party by the Co-operative Union ensures that the Party shall be regarded not as a political faction but as the political expression of the Co-operative Movement.

Sectional Boards of the Co-operative Union are assisted and advised in their work by District organisations which comprise a number of Co-operative Societies in convenient geographical groupings. Party Federations usually cover the same areas and are frequently assisted by the district organisations in maintaining contact with local co-operative societies.

### TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

There are also special National Trade Associations to consider matters of interest to, and to make representations on behalf of, societies engaged in particular trades. These associations advise the Co-operative Union on trade problems and occasionally supply valuable data to Co-operative M.P.s.

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## CHAPTER III.

### OTHER NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ORGANISATIONS

#### THE JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

The joint Parliamentary Committee of the Union and the Party's own Parliamentary Group are sometimes confused with each other.

In 1892 representatives of the Co-operative Union and of the English and Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Societies combined to form a "Parliamentary Committee" whose function was to examine legislation and to make representations to official or unofficial bodies in defence of co-operative trading rights. The Committee has since been enlarged and now includes representatives of the following organisations :—

Co-operative Union.—C.W.S.,

S.C.W.S.—Co-operative Productive Federation,

National Co-operative Managers' Association,

National Co-operative Secretaries' Association,

and the Co-operative Party, one of whose representatives is always a Co-operative M.P.

Critics of co-operative political action have urged that the Joint Parliamentary Committee is sufficient without a separate Party, but it is significant that the motion in favour of direct parliamentary representation was promoted by the Joint Parliamentary Committee itself at the Swansea Congress. It had discovered that representations to government departments were not enough—the law-making body had to be influenced and acquainted with co-operative views.

The Parliamentary Committee possesses no electoral machinery, does not engage in public propaganda, and is necessarily technical rather than political in its approach to problems. It is in fact mainly a business advisory organisation.

The link between the Party and the Joint Parliamentary Committee is established in two ways :—

- (1) Two representatives of the National Committee (one is an M.P.) sit on the Joint Parliamentary Committee.
- (2) Two representatives of the Joint Parliamentary Committee sit on the National Committee of the Party.

Thus at least four members of each committee will take part in the work of the other. The Party, as such, does not attempt to deal with the hundred and one administrative and technical problems of trade, but when public or parliamentary action is necessary the services of the Party and its M.P.s are available.



The wide public activities of the Party and the work of its M.P.s have helped to open the doors of government departments to the representatives of the Joint Parliamentary Committee and other special committees of the Movement.

### NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE AUTHORITY

The National Co-operative Authority was created by resolution of Congress in 1932. Its function is to discuss and decide upon co-operative policy on current national issues affecting the movement and to make decisions upon matters of policy arising between Congresses subject to agreement by at least a two-thirds majority.

The following comprise the membership of the Authority :—

All the members of the Executive Committee of the Co-operative Union.

Four representatives of the C.W.S.

Two representatives of the S.C.W.S.

Two representatives of the Co-operative Party.

One representative of the Co-operative Productive Federation.

One representative of the Co-operative Press.

The National Co-operative Authority deals with large questions of national policy which may, in an emergency, include political questions, but normally it would pass on to the Party matters involving the use of the machinery of the Party. There is no hard and fast way of distinguishing between political questions which would come before the Authority, and those which would be referred to the Party. Common sense and expediency are the guiding factors. In some cases the National Committee of the Party invokes the assistance of the Authority, in others the Authority may invoke that of the Party. A link between the Authority and the Party is maintained by the representation of the National Committee upon the Authority.

### CO-OPERATIVE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The Co-operative Parliamentary Group consists of all members of Parliament elected under the auspices of the Co-operative Party. It elects its own Chairman, and the Secretary of the Party acts as its Secretary. Two members attend

meetings of the National Committee and one sits, by arrangement with the National Committee, on the Joint Parliamentary Committee. Apart from their work on the floor of the House, members of the Group often accompany official deputations of the Movement in interviews with Government Ministries. On Co-operative matters the Group pays close attention to the declarations and decisions of Co-operative bodies but exercises discretion in choosing the most useful way of bringing them before Parliament. House of Commons Committee work, both of an official and unofficial kind, often provides M.P.s with the best opportunities of making their influence felt. Quite often the possession and use of closely checked information, persistence in "round table" argument, and skill in negotiation are of more value than eloquence and oratory. The orator may be a great asset on the platform and the floor of the House of Commons, but a bore in the committee room !

On many occasions on issues of taxation, trade, on public and international policy, Co-operative M.P.s have made powerful contributions to Parliamentary debates, but the greatest service has often been the work done on grey days in the prosaic and exacting atmosphere of the Committee Room.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LABOUR

A few years ago Congress accepted a recommendation that the Movement should become associated with the National Council of Labour which, at that time, consisted of representatives of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress and of the Labour Party. The constitution of the National Council of Labour was amended to provide for co-operative representation and is now as follows :—

**T.U.C.**—The Chairman and six members of the General Council.

**LABOUR PARTY.**—Chairman and two members of the Executive Committee together with the Chairman and three members of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

**CO-OPERATIVE UNION LIMITED.**—The Chairman and six persons nominated by the Executive Committee.

The secretaries of the three bodies act as Joint Secretaries. The respective chairmen of the three bodies preside at meetings in rotation.

The objects of the N.C.L. are to consult on matters of common interest, where necessary, in an emergency to take united action, and to make pronouncements on matters of national policy where there is agreement. None of the parties to this arrangement is obliged to accept a policy which is not approved by it.

Points to note are :—

- (1) There is equality of representation.
- (2) There is equality of status—no body is governed by the constitution of the other.
- (3) Each member retains its complete sovereignty in the management of its own affairs and cannot be committed against its own judgment.

The Co-operative Union allocates one of its places on the N.C.L. to the National Committee of the Party.

### DIRECTING INFLUENCES

Apart from the National Committee of the Co-operative Party, the following bodies may make decisions ultimately influencing the work and policy of the Party :—

- (1) The Central Board and the Executive Committee of the Co-operative Union and the Co-operative Union Congress. (Directly.)
- (2) The National Co-operative Authority. (Directly.)
- (3) Joint Parliamentary Committee of the Union. (Indirectly through the Co-operative Union.)
- (4) The National Council of Labour. (Indirectly through the Co-operative Union.)

## PART III.

# How the Party is Organised

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## CHAPTER I.

### FIRST STEPS

The "affiliation" of a society to the Co-operative Party is only the first step in the building up of the Party. It provides funds to secure direct parliamentary representation but does not provide seats and it does not provide either seats or funds for local government purposes. An affiliated society which has no local party organisation, is really providing funds for someone else to do what it is not doing itself. It is sometimes wise to allow the idea of a local party to simmer for a while in the minds of society members before proceeding to form a party. That process is assisted by education and organisation and will probably produce nothing without them.

The formation of a local party is often begun on the initiative of a society's Board of Management which first examines the rules of the society to see what provision is made for local political action. Quite often it is only when the society is called upon to subscribe to a local party that the rules, by laying down conditions governing the making of grants, are discovered to prescribe a course of action.

Where no question of finance arises it may be sufficient, as a beginning, for interested co-operative organisations and individuals to form a party and depend upon their subscriptions, postponing the approach to the Society members meeting until the organisation is well established. Such an organisation could include representatives of the Board of Management, Education Committee and auxiliary bodies and function in most respects as a Society Party. It is far better however to adopt completely one or other of the constitutions laid down by the Party, and including provision for financial support. In all cases the Head Office of the Party should be consulted **before** the first moves are made.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE CONSTITUTION

In 1938 the Annual Conference of the Co-operative Party adopted—and the adoption was afterwards ratified by Congress—three different types of constitution for local parties. These are printed in booklet form and may be obtained from Head Office.

SECTION A is designed to meet the needs of a single society “operating in one ; or a number of constituencies (where the committee is elected wholly by members of the Society).”

SECTION B provides for “One Society operating in one or a number of constituencies (where the Committee is a composite body representing sections of the Society).”

SECTION C meets the case of “a number of societies operating jointly in one or more constituencies.”

## GENERAL

The three constitutions have certain common features upon which comment must first be made. Each constitution defines the basis of a Society Party. It comprises “members of a Co-operative Society whose rights of membership are based upon their membership in the Society, which is financed by the Society as such, and operates under the Constitution and Regulations approved by the National Committee of the Party.”

Points to be observed are :—

- (1) The basis of membership of the Party is co-operative loyalty and association.
- (2) As the financing organisation, the society as such becomes the basis of organisation.
- (3) The constitution adopted must be approved by the National Committee of the Party, and any amendment subsequently proposed should similarly be submitted for approval.

## NAME

The name adopted should clearly indicate the area and organisation covered by the Party.

## Objects

These provide for—

- (1) Direct co-operative representation in Parliament and on public bodies.
- (2) Local education and propaganda to further policies approved by Congress.
- (3) The right to work as an organisation in its own right or in co-operation with other bodies having similar objects. The "other bodies" may be co-operative organisations or political organisations.

## CONSTITUENCY CO-OPERATIVE PARTY OR PARTIES

The Constituency machinery of the party comprises individual members of a co-operative household in a Parliamentary Division and either representatives or members of Societies and auxiliary organisations, e.g. co-operative guilds, branches of the B.F.Y.C., etc., functioning in that Division. Auxiliary bodies pay their affiliation fee to the constituency organisation.

## INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

All individual members pay the prescribed membership fee to a constituency organisation and sign the declaration of loyalty set out in the constitution. The test is a positive one and it is left to the individual submitting to it to decide whether or not this declaration is inconsistent with membership of any other organisations to which he belongs or may belong. Whether the pledge given is being loyally observed by any member is a question of fact dependent upon the conduct of the individual within the Party and upon his activities outside. It is the responsibility of the Constituency organisation, and ultimately of the Society Party to protect the Party against conduct likely to do it an injury.

## OFFICERS

The constitution provides for the election of a President, Vice-President, and a Secretary. There is no reason, however, why other officers should not be elected, e.g., a Treasurer, Literature Secretary, Membership Organiser. If a Treasurer is appointed he should be a member of any Executive Committee which is elected under Sections B and C. Other additional

officers, unless they are elected from the Executive, need not be members of that Committee, but could attend by arrangement. Officers must be individual members of the Party.

The question sometimes arises whether the conditions of individual membership should not apply to all representatives who are members of the Society Party. It is desirable that they should sign the declaration of loyalty for individual members. A suitable amendment on these lines to the constitution of the Society Party (Clause 3) will always be approved by the National Committee of the Party.

It is more difficult to insist that all members of the Society Party shall be individual members of the Party. An affiliated organisation obtains its representation in its own right. Representatives of the Society Member's Meeting, for example, attend Society Party Meetings by virtue of the Society's subscription to the funds of the Party. The Society's right to representation ought to be qualified only by the necessity of securing that the objects and policy of the Party are carried out by the representatives appointed. The signing of the declaration referred to covers this. At the same time members of the Society Party should see the wisdom of becoming subscribing individual members of the Party.

### AUDITORS

The Auditor ought not to be a member of the Executive which authorises expenditure. He is, amongst his other duties, expected to see that all expenditure has been properly authorised and to check any abuses in the use of the authority so given. The Society's auditor is therefore recommended for appointment.

### FINANCE

It will be noted that where a Society Party has established Constituency Parties, the Constituency Party will receive the affiliation fees of auxiliaries and the subscriptions of individual members, not the Society Party.

### NATIONAL ORGANISATION

A Society Party is deemed, by virtue of its Society's subscription to the national Party, to be subscribing to the funds of the Party and requires only to be registered at Head Office to receive the rights due to a Society Party.

## CANDIDATURES

Society Parties are entitled to nominate persons for the Parliamentary Panel. Nominees are required to complete a form sent to them by Head Office before endorsement. A nominee must have been for three years a bona fide member of a Society affiliated with the Co-operative Union, and must fulfil any purchasing qualification required for election to the Society Party.

A Parliamentary Candidate should be above reproach in his purchasing loyalty to his society.

The local party accepts responsibility for the nomination of candidates for local bodies. As regards both parliamentary and local government nominations, persons nominated should be conversant with the objects, policy and machinery of the Co-operative Movement which they are to represent.

## ALTERATION OF RULES

Rules should not frequently be amended and an opportunity should be given for close scrutiny of any proposed amendment before it is voted upon. It is wise, if the proposed amendment is substantial, to submit it to Head Office for guidance before it is considered by a meeting. As soon as the Secretary receives notice of amendment a copy should be forwarded to Head Office.

The differences between the three constitutions for local parties are discussed below.

## RIGHTS OF SOCIETY PARTIES

Before proceeding to consider the three separate constitutions, it should be made clear that it is the Society Party as such which the National Committee recognises as the medium of contact between itself and the various political units of the Society Party. The Society Party speaks on behalf of the Society in political matters, and submits all resolutions to the National Committee or to the Annual Conference of the Party on behalf of its own local units. It is the body which is entitled to vote in the election of a representative of local parties to the National Committee of the Party.



## CHAPTER III.

## CONSTITUTION. SECTION A

A number of the larger societies, especially in the London area, operate under Section A of the Constitution, which provides for a Society Party consisting entirely of representatives elected by the general body of members of the society. The conditions of nomination and election of the members of the Society Party are usually defined in the Rules of the Society.

## CONSTITUENCY PARTY OR PARTIES

Section A does not provide for any representation of constituency units on the Society Party, but in practice constituency parties may be called together and consulted by the Society Party on electoral questions. It is most desirable that this course should be followed if electoral units are to feel that they have some voice in making the decisions which they are to operate.

Section A does ensure that any person or organisation wishing to play a part in local co-operative Party work shall find in the electoral organisation the main outlet for activity.

The responsibility of the Society as such is clearly defined, and the Society Party is in a strong position to speak for the society since it is directly elected by its members. Members of the Society Party, having stood for their election specifically to do political work, are likely to be keenly interested in co-operative politics.

Amongst the outstanding disadvantages of Section A is that it makes no provision for the representation of the political units and auxiliary organisations upon the governing body of the Society Party. In addition, the experience of the Board of Management and of the Education Committee is not directly accessible to the Society Party. Extra constitutional provision is sometimes made for joint consultations between the Board of Management, the Education Committee and the Society Party. The simplicity of the constitution may, in practice, be lost in the machinery which has to be provided outside Section A (as printed) for consultation between the Society Party and other co-operative organisations. Co-ordination of co-operative effort tends to be achieved not within, but outside the Constitution laid down in Section A.

It will be observed that Section A does not provide for an Executive Committee. This body is not necessary since the Society Party here consists of only a small number of persons. Special work may be undertaken by sub-committees, e.g., policy, administration, electoral machinery, etc.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CONSTITUTION. SECTION B

A Society Party operating under Section B is a composite body made up of representatives of co-operative organisations functioning as part of one society. In the printed constitution B, as passed by Congress, the numbers which shall represent each co-operative organisation are left open to conform to local needs. There is no virtue in a small governing body if a larger one widens the experience represented and increases local interest, but these considerations have to be balanced against the danger of exhausting political interest at the point where it should begin. The Society Party is the point at which organisations are **represented** and their interest in the Party widened. It is in the Constituency Party that the individual member should find the means of expressing political interest. In short, the Society Party is the local co-operative political parliament—it must represent **all** through **some**.

### COMMENTS ON CONSTITUTION B

#### CLAUSE 3

It is usually better rather to include **some** Board of Management representatives than all, unless the Board consists say, of only half-a-dozen persons. In this way responsibility is fixed and not too broadly distributed. The same comment applies to representatives of the Education Committee.

In a big society in a large area, guild branches may be grouped for the purpose of electing their representatives. They might, for example, be grouped in parliamentary divisions where, say, half a dozen guild branches operate.

While no attempt should be made to limit the right of the Society Members' Meeting in the election of its representatives, party supporters should see that persons who are warmly in sympathy with the Party are encouraged to stand for election. Difficulty is sometimes experienced in obtaining representatives

of the employees. In this connection it should be borne in mind that Society officials—managers and other departmental heads—are also employees who may give valuable service to the local party.

It is often found convenient that the elections of employees' representatives should take place at the annual meeting of members of the Superannuation Fund, or at a meeting of an employees' Recreation Club, or at some other function to which all employees, irrespective of their particular trade union, may belong. The constitution states that these representatives should be "directly elected by and from the employees of the society" so it would not be in order to nominate them to a meeting of the Society unless only employees voted on the nominations. Another method, of course, would be to circularise the employees, and later to circulate nominations with a ballot paper returnable to the Office of the local party. Constituency Parties and branches of the Party are entitled to representation. The representatives should be elected by their own organisations.

A branch of the party may comprise either more or less than a Constituency Party.

It may be a unit of the party covering a parish, or it may cross all constituency boundaries and conform to no clearly defined electoral area.

A branch may be merely a nucleus of organisation from which a clearly defined Constituency Party or parties may later be formed, or it may comprise a group of persons operating within a large local government ward, or embracing a number of wards, or again it may be formed without regard to ward boundaries. Wherever possible, units of the party should conform to definite parliamentary and local government boundaries and be either a Constituency Party or a Ward organisation responsible to the Constituency Party. The term "branch" is usually applied to a unit of the party not wholly and exclusively embracing a local government or parliamentary electoral area. Wherever possible an electoral unit of the Party should bear the name of the electoral unit it covers.

#### CLAUSE 4

Constituency parties and their functions are dealt with later.

# CLAUSE 7

Provides for the election of an Executive Committee from and by the Society Party. Persons elected to the Society Party represent the various interests of the Society, but the Executive Committee must think and act on behalf of the Society Party as such. The members of the Executive Committee, even if nominated by the various sections comprising the Society Party, are responsible not to the nominating sections but to the party, and require after nomination to be elected by the Society Party.

## CHAPTER V.

### CONSTITUTION. SECTION C

The peculiarity of Section C is in Clauses 3 (Constitution) and 4 (Constituency Organisations).

Societies are organised without regard to local government or parliamentary administrative boundaries. They may operate in much less or much more than a parliamentary or a local government area. Section C of the Constitution meets two types of needs :—

- (1) A relatively compact area in which a number of co-operative societies operate without regard to parliamentary or local government boundaries. A Parliamentary Borough may contain a dozen constituencies and six or seven co-operative societies, each of which may operate in one, less than one, or more than one constituency. In addition, some of these societies may extend into adjacent local government or parliamentary areas outside the borough. Such a case is met by having a Society Party representing all the Societies in that area and creating Constituency Parties and other local units to operate within electoral boundaries.
- (2) At the other extreme there is the Parliamentary County Division in which several societies, often small ones, operate, and there may be several types of local authority. Any one of the Societies may be too small to maintain an effective political organisation.



In such a case Societies should operate together under Section C, and the Society Party so formed create branches throughout the constituency. Any branch of the Constituency Party should act in consultation with the representatives of local societies within its own area.

### CLAUSE 3

This clause provides for the representation of the participating societies, Constituency Parties, and auxiliary organisations. Employees' representation is not specified but is not thereby excluded. Here again the Society Party should be fully representative of all co-operative organisations. It may meet less often than a Society Party representing a compactly organised single society. Much of the directive and administrative work will fall upon the Executive Committee mentioned in Clause 7, while the Constituency Parties will meet regularly to do the electoral work of the Party. The number of persons comprising the Society Party will depend largely upon the number of societies participating and the number of constituencies covered.

### CLAUSE 4

The main part of Clause 4 is similar to that laid down in Sections A and B, but there is an addition which reads :—

“ Branches of the.....  
Co-operative Party shall be established in the Parliamentary constituencies which come within the area of the affiliated societies attached to the Co-operative Party. Provided that where a Parliamentary constituency is partly within the area above defined and partly within the area of some other Co-operative Party no branch shall be established except after consultation with that other Party. Membership of a branch shall be confined to individual members of a co-operative household, who sign the declaration as set out in Clause 6 of this Constitution.”

The object in the addition is to prevent overlapping and to increase the chances that either one or both the organisations concerned will accept the responsibility of organising the

area. If each acts separately the result is overlapping, if each does nothing because it is not wholly responsible, the area is neglected.

The principle operating in Sections A, B, and C of the Constitution is that an auxiliary body should affiliate to the electoral unit which functions for the area in which that body operates. Where a branch exists the auxiliary will affiliate to the branch, but where there is no branch it will affiliate to the Constituency Party until a branch is formed.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### RELATIONS WITH CO-OPERATIVE AUXILIARIES

The object of affiliating guilds and other auxiliary bodies to the local party is to reap the advantage of their special experience of the Co-operative Movement and to gain their organised support. Until co-operators understand something of the social purpose of their Movement they are unlikely to value it highly enough to appreciate the case for its defence, nor are they able to understand the applicability of co-operative principles to the life of the nation. Until a society member is co-operative-conscious he will not be co-operatively politically conscious. In a sense, therefore, we begin where other co-operative bodies finish. As a party we have to work upon the raw materials furnished by the co-operative auxiliaries.

The representatives of co-operative organisations to a Society Party should themselves be "politically conscious" so that they not only understand what the Party is doing but actively contribute to the work of the Party.

It is important that organisations should not frequently change their Society Party representatives, otherwise the Party will have too many "apprentices" and too few experienced workers, while the affiliated organisations will themselves not gain fully from their representation. Society Party members, after all, are members of a governing body, and they should be active crusaders for the Party within their own organisation, to which they should also regularly report.

An analysis of party affiliations shows that societies which have no auxiliary organisations rarely join the Party. There is no organised support upon which to build. Very often opposition to the Party, especially where it is the result of misunderstanding, is removed by the educational and propaganda work of the auxiliaries. A majority of the guilds are affiliated to the Party.

## CHAPTER VII.

### FINANCE OF LOCAL PARTIES

Most Society Parties receive a grant from the Society to finance their political work. In some cases they apply periodically to the Committee of Management for it. The Committee of Management then makes a recommendation to the Society Members' Meeting. Many societies make provision in their rules for a yearly or half-yearly grant of a stated sum, or for an amount of so much per Society member.

What a Society Party will require depends upon what work it proposes to do. If it runs, or is to run, a parliamentary candidate it will require more than if it does not. A party which runs or proposes to run local government candidates requires more than one which does not.

Before applying for a grant a Society Party should make an estimate of its annual expenditure and income and should place this before the Committee of Management, thus:—

### ESTIMATED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

INCOME.	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE.	£	s.	d.
Collections at Meetings	15	10	0	Meetings, Conferences, etc.....	50	0	0
Subscriptions towards Elections .....	10	10	0	Local Council Elec- tions .....	25	0	0
Sales of Literature* ....	9	5	0	Expenses of Committee	8	0	0
School Fees.....	7	15	0	Remuneration of Officials .....	25	0	0
Income Deficit .....	115	0	0	Conference delegations	15	0	0
				Circulars, stationery, etc.	10	0	0
				Literature .....	10	0	0
				Affiliation fees .....	5	0	0
				Grants to Constituency Parties .....	10	0	0
	£158	0	0		£158	0	0

No provision is made on the income side for membership or affiliation fees since these should be paid to the Constituency Parties. The figures given above are of course quite arbitrary, but an estimated deficit should provide a basis for the application for society grant.

Far the best way of dealing with local finance is to have embodied in the rules of the society, provision for a Co-operative Party Fund from which all political grants and fees are met. Such a rule should name the body set up to administer the fund, and that should be the Society Party as defined in the Party Constitution. In all cases before drafting a rule on these lines the advice of Head Office should be sought and a copy of the Society's rules forwarded.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### VOLUNTARY PARTIES AND FEDERATIONS

A Voluntary Party is, as its name implies, a voluntary association of local co-operators pledged to bring their Society into membership of the Co-operative Party and formed for that purpose. Its structure is much like that of a Society Party except that it has no official society support. Such a body should concentrate upon the one task of converting the society into a belief in the Co-operative Party. As early as possible after it succeeds in its purpose it should give way to an officially established Society Party in which no doubt its members will play a leading part. While it accepts the affiliation of co-operative auxiliaries, it must rely largely upon the individual membership it is able to secure. The whole purpose of the formation of a Voluntary Party is lost if it becomes either a sounding board for malcontents or a school for the self-righteous. Opposition to the Party is not always the result of malice or ignorance. It is often due either to misunderstanding or needless fear of the consequences of affiliation. First convince the Societies' auxiliaries and enrol their members in the Party, then go out amongst interested co-operators and steadily build up membership. Gain the ear of the Society and avoid becoming a bore. Test the opinion of the Society only after careful preparation and consultation with the National Organisers.



Many of the public activities in which a Society Party engages are beyond the power of a Voluntary Party. The Society is the sphere of work of the Voluntary Party, not the general public. First convert the Society as a Voluntary Party, and later having succeeded and attained the status of a Society Party, "take on" the public. In building up the membership of a Voluntary Party care must be taken to ensure that all members hold unquestionable co-operative credentials. Political interest is not enough—*co-operative* political interest is essential. It is easier to create a good row than a good party!

### CO-OPERATIVE PARTY FEDERATIONS

Much of the missionary work of the Party has been done by the Federations of the Party. Federations are as a rule based upon the area covered by one or more of the District Organisations of the Co-operative Unions, and consist of affiliated organisations. The unit of affiliation to the Federation is the Society Party or Voluntary Party but where no local party exists organisations may affiliate directly to the federation. Federations register with the Head Office of the Party and receive an annual grant in support of their work. Most of them send representatives to Annual Conference. (See later Section.)

### THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CO-OPERATIVE PARTY FEDERATIONS

To co-ordinate the work of the federations, with the support and approval of the National Committee of the Party, a National Association of Federations was formed some years ago. It accepts the affiliation of federations and is financed from this source, with an additional grant from the National Committee. It holds an Annual Meeting during the Annual Party Conference and there elects an Executive Committee which meets several times during the year. Its job is to collate and examine the experience of actual federation workers and issue advice to federations in conformity with Party policy. It is mainly concerned with administration. Federation Policy is decided by the affiliated membership and the National Committee of the Party.

## PART IV.

# The Local Party

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### CHAPTER I.

#### HOW TO FORM A SOCIETY PARTY

The actual procedure in the formation of local parties is as various as local conditions. Here are some of the methods adopted :—

- (1) The initiative is taken by the Society's Committee of Management which tables a motion at a Members' Meeting. This course is, in most cases, followed only after the Committee has seen some evidence that the proposal will be supported by influential society opinion. Auxiliary bodies may previously have requested the Committee to table such a motion.

Frequently the motion of the Committee of Management asks that a Committee shall be set up to draft a constitution and report to a future meeting. The report would include recommendations upon the Constitution of the Society Party itself, finance, and any amendment of Society Rules necessary to form the Party.

- (2) In some cases the initiative is taken by the Society's auxiliaries acting through Society members who have the right to submit a motion to a members' meeting.
- (3) A Voluntary Party, having achieved the affiliation of the Society, may go a step further and, again acting through individuals, promote a motion.
- (4) A motion may be submitted, entirely without consultation, by a private individual.

Before testing society opinion every effort should be made to secure the support of auxiliaries and persons of influence in the Society. Where the Committee of Management is itself taking action it

can clear away misunderstandings by explaining to the auxiliaries and to its employees and officials the case for local political action.

Amongst objections met are the following :—

OBJECTION 1.—'To take local political action would split the society.

'This is contrary to experience. A division of opinion is not a split. So long as a society is efficiently run its members do not withdraw. Objectors have the constitutional right to table a counter-motion if they so wish. The fact is that Societies gain in interest and in vigour of leadership when they engage in local politics. Figures of trade and membership support this.

OBJECTION 2.—The formation of a Co-operative Party may divide the local democratic forces.

'To mobilise co-operative opinion must surely unite the democratic forces. In most cases not to educate and mobilise co-operative political opinion is to leave it at the mercy of the non-co-operative politician.

'The Head Office and National Organisers of the Party are always ready to advise in the formation of local parties.

## NEXT STEPS

As soon as a constitution has been adopted, organisations entitled to be represented on the Society Party should be invited to appoint representatives and attend the first meeting of the new party. Sometimes the Society Secretary acts as convener until officials are appointed, or the Board may appoint some other person to summon the first meeting. The notice convening the meeting should contain a copy of the new party's constitution, state how many representatives each organisation may appoint, and set out the items of business to be transacted at the meeting. The President of the Society or some other person appointed by the Committee of Management usually takes the chair at the first meeting. Here is a specimen order of business :—

- (1) Chairman's Welcome to Representatives.
- (2) Notice of meeting and summary of procedure up to calling meeting. Reports of organisations sending representatives—by convener.

- (3) Election of Chairman.
- (4) Election of Secretary, Vice-Chairman and other officers.
- (5) Election of Executive Committee.
- (6) Address by National Organiser on the Work of a Society Party.
- (7) Date of next meeting.

At this first meeting party officials and an Executive Committee are to be elected. It is easy to appoint the wrong persons to office, and so hard to put it right afterwards. Where members of a Society Party know each other through years of active association in the Co-operative Movement they will know whom to select as officials. By making only a temporary appointment especially of secretary, a Society Party may safeguard itself against inefficiency in one of its most important offices.

Many questions of procedure which confront a new party are outside the constitutions laid down for Society Parties.

Amongst matters which require to be settled are :—

- (1) Standing Orders to govern Party Meetings. (See page 68.)
- (2) Date of Annual Meeting.
- (3) Procedure for nomination and election of the Executive Committee and of officials.
- (4) Nomination of persons as parliamentary and local government candidates.
- (5) Accounts and party financial administration.
- (6) Appointment of delegates to conferences, schools, etc.
- (7) Powers and duties of the Executive Committee.

The newly appointed Executive Committee should consider these questions at its first meeting and would be wise in having the National Organiser present to assist.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

What appears under this heading applies to the Society Party itself where it is formed under Section A of the Constitution and therefore has no Executive Committee. It is the function of the Executive Committee not only to transact much of the routine business of the Party but to review every phase of the local party's activity and to maintain contact with the National Committee of the Party. Society Party meetings can be made interesting if they are not too much involved in routine matters and are free to consider the wider questions of policy. One of the ambitions of the Executive Committee should be to present to each Society Party meeting a lively and interesting agenda. Even in cases where the Executive Committee has no power to decide an item of business it should be prepared to make a recommendation to the Society Party Meeting.

A typical Agenda of an Executive Committee Meeting would be :—

- (1) Minutes of previous meeting (unless already accepted by the Society Party).
- (2) Minutes of Society Party Meeting—to be read for information.
- (3) Questions arising.
- (4) Remits from Society Party Meeting.
- (5) Correspondence.
- (6) Reports of Officials and of Sub-Committees.
- (7) Reports of Constituency Parties.
- (8) Agenda of next Society Party Meeting.
- (9) Time, date, and place of next Executive Committee meeting.
- (10) Any new business.

Minutes of meetings, where possible, should be duplicated and circulated to members at least a few days before they have to be considered.

Correspondence should be classified so that letters involving the fulfilment of existing policy are taken separately from those requiring the making of a new policy.

Reports of officials — Secretary, Treasurer, Literature Secretary and Membership officer should be periodically circulated to the Executive Committee. Remits from the Society Party Meeting should be dealt with immediately and a report presented to the next Society Party Meeting.

The Society Party is responsible for the work of the Constituency Parties and the initiative in forming such parties should be taken by the Society Party and its Executive Committee. It should spur the Constituency Parties on to their maximum effort and assist them in building up membership. The Executive Committee should always be represented at Constituency Party Meetings.

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE SOCIETY PARTY MEETING

A dull agenda is a poor advertisement for a Society Party Meeting. The passing of the Executive Committee minutes will dispose of most routine business, but a specially interesting item can always figure on the agenda separately and approval of the relevant minute be held over to permit this. After the reading of minutes the Chairman should again read out the headings of the minutes to refresh the minds of the meeting before a vote is taken.

The Society Party Meeting is the policy-making body and the Executive Committee should provide it with such special reports and information as will enable the party to reach sound decisions. Short provocative addresses followed by questions and discussion are an aid. Society officials and other subject-specialists should be invited to address Society Party Meetings. Whilst speakers from outside organisations should occasionally be invited, the tendency to overdo this should be checked. It sometimes happens that a Society Party member, who is also a member of some other organisation, is much more anxious to propagate the views of that organisation than those of the Party.

Reports of delegations are usually given at Society Party Meetings. These may become a weariness to the flesh when they are overdone, especially where the rota system of sending delegations is followed. In this connection parties should

remember that it is the duty of a delegate not only to report, but if necessary to state the appointing party's view at the meeting he attends. The rota system may be fair to the individual member but not to the party.

The Standing Orders of the Party should define the quorum necessary to transact business—a third of the number entitled to attend is frequently laid down.

## ANNUAL MEETING OF SOCIETY PARTY

The main business of the Annual Meeting is to review the activities of the past year and to start the Party on its new year by electing officials and an Executive Committee. It should sum up every important aspect of the year's work and its agenda of business will usually be something like the following :

- (1) Chairman's Remarks (including a welcome to new Society Party representatives).
- (2) Minutes of last Annual Meeting (read only for information as they have already been accepted).
- (3) Minutes of Executive Committee or Sub-committee meetings held since the previous meeting of the Society Party.
- (4) Correspondence (items not requiring immediate decision should go to the new Executive Committee if not already considered).
- (5) Annual Report of Executive Committee (presented by the secretary. This report should make reference to membership, literature sales, Constituency Party activities, the main decisions of the Executive Committee during the year, and in general survey the organisation and activities of the Party). Special reports of the Literature Secretary, Meetings Officer, Membership Officer, etc., should be included in this report.
- (6) Appointment of Scrutineers.
- (7) Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
- (8) Election of Secretary (if he is not a full-time official).
- (9) Election of any other Officials.
- (10) Election of Executive Committee.
- (11) Financial Report—by Treasurer.

- (12) Auditor's Report.
- (13) Adoption of Financial Statement.
- (14) Date of next meeting if not fixed by Standing Orders.
- (15) Any new business.

If a postal ballot for officials has been taken the Scrutineers will count the votes and the Chairman declare the results. The better way is not to take a ballot of organisations, but a vote of the representatives at the Society Party Meetings after nominations have been received.



## PART V.

# Duties of Officials

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### CHAPTER I.

#### CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

According to the rules of some societies the President of the Society becomes the President of all the Society's auxiliaries including the local party. The office of President is sometimes created to attach to the organisation the prestige of an individual who is probably too busy to take part in the activities of the organisation, but who may occasionally make public appearances on its behalf. Such an office is strictly speaking more decorative than executive in character. In such a case it is wise to appoint a Chairman and Vice-chairman, in addition to the President, and it is proper to define their respective functions and rights in the Standing Orders of the Party.

"The A B C of Chairmanship" by Sir Walter Citrine, K.B.E., is an excellent guide for the chairman and each party should possess a copy for his use. The Chairman must familiarise himself with the Constitution, Rules, and Standing Orders of the local party. It is equally necessary that he should get to know the mental and emotional make-up of the Party. It is not sufficient that he should be acquainted with the formalities of procedure; he must know how to apply them with tact and acceptable firmness. He should know when to speak and when to be silent. He must keep watch on the agenda, the clock and the meeting, with a clear idea of how to ration the available time so that meetings run smoothly until the agenda is complete. He is not only an official of the Party—he is the custodian of the rights of every member of the Party.

A good chairman will study his agenda, get to know what each item is about and why it has been placed on the agenda, e.g., whether it is merely for information or calls for a decision.

He should be quick to detect a new face (or an absent one!) and refer to personal matters like the sickness, misfortune, or good fortune of members before business is begun.

Preliminaries over, the minutes will be taken. After the secretary has read the minutes they must be moved and seconded before discussion takes place—their adoption thereby becomes a motion before the meeting. It is then open to a member to ask a question on the minutes as a whole or on any particular minute, the Chairman or Secretary usually replying. A member of an Executive Committee cannot at an Executive Committee meeting move to refer back or amend the minutes or a minute of the previous Executive Committee meeting except on the grounds of inaccuracy. He would require to give notice of motion to challenge the decision recorded in the minute. The Society Party, being superior in authority to the Executive Committee, could refer back or amend an Executive Committee minute which had not already been approved by the Society Party. Minutes which record the decisions of one society party meeting cannot be amended—except that an inaccuracy in minuting may be corrected—or referred back at the next without notice of motion. After questions or admissible correction or amendment have been dealt with the motion for adoption is then put to the vote. Usually in the event of a tie the Chairman has a second or casting vote which should be provided for in Standing Orders. In voting on an amendment to a motion, the vote should be taken first **for** and **against** the amendment and then **for** and **against** the motion if no further amendment is forthcoming. (Wherever possible important motions or amendments should be submitted in writing to the Chairman.) A person may disagree both with a motion and an amendment and should have the opportunity of voting against both.

At a Society Party Meeting it should not be necessary to read every letter dealt with by the Executive Committee, since the minutes will contain a summary of each letter. Upon request of a member, however, a letter should be read in full. Each report submitted to a meeting requires to be “received” if it is the report of a conference, or “adopted” with the opportunity of amendment if it recommends action.

When a notice of motion has been submitted by a member, it should be taken early in the meeting, or by arrangement with the mover.

It is usual and proper, where a chairman wishes to speak on any matter in which he is personally or exclusively involved, that he should vacate the chair while the matter is being considered, the Vice-chairman taking his place.

A Chairman's ruling may be challenged, and on a motion the opinion of the meeting tested.

A point of order may be raised when some matter before the meeting is being dealt with in a manner which is different from that laid down in the Constitution, Rules, and Standing Orders of the Party or which transgresses the accepted rules of debate. For example, if the Chairman permitted questions on the minutes to be asked before the minutes had been moved and seconded, it would be correct to raise a point of order calling the Chairman's attention to his error. A point of order is not a mere disagreement about opinions expressed in debate, but is a contention about procedure—the handling of the business before the meeting.

The Chairman must keep the meeting in good temper and should therefore keep his own. Under his direction members will look forward to the next.

## VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Vice-chairman presides at meetings in the absence of the Chairman and should be consulted by his Chairman wherever possible and given every facility to enable him to substitute for or succeed the Chairman. A considerate Chairman will occasionally allow his Vice-chairman to act for him even when he himself is present, and will be delighted if his guidance and training produce a better man than himself.

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## CHAPTER II.

### SECRETARY

Much of the success of a local party depends upon the enthusiasm, alertness and efficiency of the Secretary. He should be acquainted with the duties of all other officials and be in a position to advise them. On the other hand, he should be glad to delegate duties to other officials where this can be

done—e.g., the arrangements for purchase and sale of literature to a literature secretary. The Secretary should know what everyone else is doing, but not attempt to do it all himself.

Chief amongst the Secretary's duties are :—

Taking of minutes. Minutes should be brief but informative, a record of all decisions reached at the meeting to which they relate. They are not a full report of the meeting but a summary of business transacted. Minutes, when passed by the meeting, should be signed by the Chairman with the date of signing. Usually the Secretary takes only rough notes of the proceedings and afterwards writes up the minutes. He should have the originals of all resolutions submitted in writing.

### FULL-TIME SECRETARY

There are up-to now only a few full-time Party Secretaries. It is impossible for a person in his spare time to engage in the wide range of political and social duties necessary to effective political organisation on a large scale.

Running modern political organisation, propaganda, and electioneering is a specialised job, and the older parties recognise this by appointing not only secretaries of their local associations, but constituency agents. Co-operative Societies stand to gain by providing for their members advice and information upon the multitude of questions which enter into the daily lives of their members. The employment of a permanent full-time secretary enables the local party to organise a department to provide advice and information for society members and to extend and develop the Party's organisation throughout the Society's area. In areas where a Society Party is unable to maintain a full-time secretary it might be possible for the Educational and Political Committees jointly to employ a full-time secretary. The Party owes much to its voluntary and part-time secretaries, but it is not possible for them to find time for the organising work which needs to be done where local government and parliamentary candidatures are promoted.

### CORRESPONDENCE

The Secretary, except where otherwise arranged, receives and replies to all letters. He should immediately upon receipt of a letter acknowledge it, especially where a reply is awaited. Some secretaries have printed post-cards to acknowledge letters.



Copies of all letters sent by him should be kept by the Secretary. A numbered letter-book is available at Head Office, price 2s. Where correspondence is extensive letter-sheets are handier for filing purposes.

Letters should be classified for treatment as noted earlier. Current correspondence can be kept in a special folder marked "current." As soon as it has been finally dealt with, it should be posted to its appropriate folder.

How many folders are kept depends upon the amount of correspondence done, but folders are needed at least for all letters received from and sent to :—

Affiliated Organisations.

Head Office.

National Organisers.

Federations.

Outside Bodies—Trades Council, Labour Party, etc.

Members of Executive Committee—Notices and letters.

## HINTS TO SECRETARIES

A folder exists not to hide but to house correspondence ! Letters and replies should be clipped or otherwise fastened together before filing.

All folders should be kept in a convenient box, desk or cupboard for ready reference.

The Secretary should keep an account in a letters book of all correspondence, with names and addresses of senders and recipients, and postage charges of those despatched by him.

Filing and posting to the appropriate folders should be done as soon as possible after letters have been dealt with by the Party.

The files should be frequently overhauled, unimportant and formal letters being destroyed and important letters kept clearly identified in separate folders.

If the secretary has any doubt about these matters, the chief clerk or some other society official will usually be ready to advise him how to proceed and the services of the Head Office and the National Organisers are always available.

The secretary will issue the notices for all meetings. In checking a notice a secretary should bear in mind four words: "Who," "What," "When," and "Where."

"Who"—Name of organisation. "What"—Nature of meeting and business. "When"—Date and time. "Where"—Place of meeting clearly described.

The Secretary will attend all sub-committee meetings, prepare minutes and reports unless otherwise decided. He will book speakers and send reminders to them. It is in attention to detail that the good secretary shows to advantage, and in foreseeing questions that are likely to arise and being prepared to meet them.

A newly appointed secretary will profit by going through old minute books and looking up important documents and reports in old files and making a note of outstanding decisions.

He should prepare a timetable, e.g. :—

- (1) Date of Annual Meeting.
- (2) Last date for sending out nomination papers for officers and Executive Committee.
- (3) Last date for receiving nominations.
- (4) Last date for nomination for municipal candidates ; etc., etc.

Amongst other points to watch are :—

Circulars announcing Annual Party Conference (usually sent out in November) and inviting organisations to submit resolutions for Conference Agenda. Circular asking for the appointment of Annual Conference delegates and inviting amendments to resolutions. (Do not wait for circular to start to consider what resolutions to submit for the Agenda.)

Conference credentials for delegates.

Annual Party Report and Final Agenda.

Circulars for Annual Party School.

Copies of resolutions passed at Annual Conference.

The Party Bulletin.

Verbatim Report of Annual Conference proceedings, etc.

He should keep a diary of his society's principal events and of events organised by other bodies, Federations, District Associations, to avoid clashing of dates. His reading of the "Co-operative News" and other publications should make him aware of prominent or rising speakers, etc. The more tabulated information he has the better he is likely to serve the party.

### RECORDS

The Society Party Secretary should have in his or her records the following items :—

- (1) Number of individual members enrolled in each Constituency Party and this should be kept up to date as far as possible so that a return can be made to Head Office if required.
- (2) List of Halls for meetings, the terms of hire, and names and addresses to which application for use should be made.
- (3) List of local speakers and addresses.
- (4) Names and addresses of members who will canvass at election or other times.
- (5) List of Printers and addresses.

These are necessary in case the secretary or key officer is suddenly found to be unavailable at the moment required. It is not enough to have a good memory. This kind of information should be recorded.

The Secretary, unless some other officer has been appointed, will keep a register of members with ruled column for members' subscriptions.

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## CHAPTER III.

### TREASURER

Where a Treasurer is not appointed the Secretary has to keep the accounts of the Party. The Party should have an account with the C.W.S. Bank if its finances are not managed by the local society. To open an account at the C.W.S. Bank it is necessary to pass a formal resolution instructing that this be done and to apply to the bank for forms for the specimen

signatures of those who will be authorised to sign cheques. Here again, society officials are mostly ready to advise on questions of detail. It is usual to authorise the person acting as Treasurer, the Chairman, and perhaps one other member of the Executive Committee, to sign cheques, at least two signatures being necessary to each cheque.

The bank will provide a pass book or periodical statement of the client's banking account, a book of slips for paying in to the bank, and a cheque book for making payments from the account. All but quite small payments should be made by cheque and all money should be paid into the bank the treasurer putting himself in funds by drawing a cheque.

The Treasurer will need a numbered receipt book, will give a receipt for all money received and will obtain a receipt for all money he pays out. The counterfoils in his receipt book should be retained, or better still a duplicate receipt book, providing an exact carbon copy of each receipt, should be purchased. He should file all the receipts he himself holds for payments made by him.

He needs a cash book to record income and expenditure. Cash books ruled in columns are a convenience. Here is a specimen :—



## INCOME.

Date.	Receipt No.	Detail.	Fees and Subscriptions	Socials.	Literature	Sundries	Bank
Jan. 1st	1	Sales surplus .....	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
" 3rd	3	Profit Christmas Social .....		3 2 0			
" 8th	2	Members' Subscriptions .....	5 5 0				
" 10th	—	Paid to Bank .....					9 15 0
" 12th	4	Society Grant .....	10 0 0			0 10 6	
" 13th	5	Collections at Meetings .....					
" 20th	—	Paid to Bank .....					10 13 0
			£ 15 5 0	3 2 0	1 10 6	0 10 6	20 8 0

## PAYMENTS.

Date	Detail	Affilia- tion Fees	Grants	Rents	Delega- tion Expenses	Sundries	Cheques	Cheque No.
Jan. 1st	Federation Fees .....	£ s. d. 1 1 0	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	800301
" 3rd	Delegate Federation Con- ference .....				0 14 3		0 14 3	800302
" 5th	Dalton Street, Dec. 20th .....			0 10 6			0 10 6	800303
" 6th	Repairs to Typewriter .....					0 5 3	0 5 3	800304
" 9th	Queens Street, Dec. 28th .....			0 7 6			0 7 6	800305
" 14th	Blackwell Const. Party .....		2 10 0				2 10 0	800306
" 21st	Telephone Account .....					1 19 0	1 19 0	800307
" 28th	Secretary's Petty Cash .....					1 10 0	1 10 0	800308
	£	1 1 0	2 10 0	0 18 0	0 14 3	3 14 3	8 17 6	

On the above showing there is a surplus over the period of £11 10s. 6d., which balance is at the bank.

### STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR JANUARY

INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
Profits on Literature...	1	10 6	Federation Fees .....	1	1 0
Profits on Christmas Social.....	3	2 0	Grants to Parties .....	2	10 0
Members' Subs. ....	5	5 0	Delegates' Expenses...	0	14 3
Society Grant .....	10	0 0	Rents.....	0	18 0
Collections.....	0	10 6	Sundries .....	3	14 3
			Balance .....	11	10 6
	£20	8 0		£20	8 0

### BANK ACCOUNT

	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
Paid in .....	20	8 0	Cheques Drawn .....	8	17 6
			Balance, January 31st	11	10 6
	£20	8 0		£20	8 0

A detailed account would be kept of all income and receipts from socials, literature, and other items where only the balance—profit and loss—is carried into the cash statement. For example, one side of your literature statement would show all payments made for literature and the other side details of all money received. This would usually be kept by the Literature Secretary if a separate officer is appointed.

The Annual Statement will set out in summary form all the payments and receipts as abstracted from the monthly statements, that is the totals of payments and receipts with the cash and bank balances at the beginning and the end of the year.

## CHAPTER IV.

### AUDITOR

A lay auditor may find the following tips useful. The auditor should know exactly what to look for when he commences his job. He should see that all the detailed accounts, and receipts, correspond with items on the payments

side, and that the Treasurer's receipt book corresponds with all moneys received by him. He needs the Membership Subscription Book, to see that the amounts received agree with the totals in the cash book. He should check all columns and totals to see they are added correctly. He requires the Book of Bank "Paying in" Slips to see that amounts entered as payments to Bank tally with the figures in the Bank Account. He needs all cheque books used during the period to see that all payments are correctly entered and to check totals. Then he requires the Bank Book or Statement brought up to date by the Bank—that is, entered up to the end of the period under review. He must see that the entries on both sides of the Bank Book or Statement correspond with the "Paying in" Book, and on the other side with the individual cheque payments. He must see that interest is entered as a receipt and bank commission or charges for cheque books as payments in the Statement of Accounts. He will check the items on the Annual Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet to see that they are correctly transferred from the separate accounts. When he is satisfied that everything is in order he will certify the accounts to be correct. He will discuss with the Treasurer any improvements he may wish to suggest in the way transactions are recorded, and will duly report to the Annual Meeting. He may also wish to discuss with the Executive Committee the results of his examination of the Party finances and the Executive Committee should always provide that opportunity.



## PART VI.

# Getting to Work

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### CHAPTER I.

#### PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Co-operative Party is responsible for the political education of the membership of the Co-operative Movement. It has to state the Co-operative case to the general public and no one who hears or reads that case should have the slightest doubt of its co-operative character. The success of a party is to be judged not only by the extent of its propaganda but by its co-operative quality. Many parties are reluctant to hold public meetings unless they can secure the services of an M.P., or other prominent national speaker. Local parties must themselves help to establish the reputations of speakers. Most prominent speakers were themselves once unknown. If, having heard a speaker, a party is satisfied that it has "the goods" it should take steps to advertise and sell them to the public. In general, co-operative speakers are of the constructive type. This close connection with an organisation whose survival and expansion depends upon constructive thinking and constructive work makes them better announcers of the new co-operative order than denouncers of the old capitalistic order.

The organisation of propaganda cannot be left to the Secretary. A Meetings Officer, working in conjunction with the Secretary and the Executive Committee, should be appointed, especially for extensive campaigns. Booking a speaker, hiring a hall and printing a few posters and handbills are only the beginning of the job.

For propaganda purposes meetings fall under two headings:—

- (1) Meetings to advance the Party within the Society.
  - (a) To win general support.
  - (b) To build up the organisation.

(2) Public propaganda to advocate party policy.

(a) To gain general support.

(b) To further some more specific end.

For meetings under 1 (a) the backbone of the audience will usually come from the auxiliaries and a speaker of standing amongst the auxiliaries should be chosen and the meeting held, if possible, on the Society's premises, as centrally as circumstances permit. A brief biographical sketch of the speaker should be circulated with the notice of the meeting. Individual invitations are more effective than handbills. The Society's journal should boost the meeting in the editorial columns. See that invitations go to all society committees, officials and employees—personal invitations if possible. Advertise at all society functions and get chairmen of such functions to boost it. Use the Society's choir or orchestra, or even produce a one-act play or show a film during the evening. See that all Society Party Members are informed and supplied with a few invitations blanks for their friends.

1 (b) will be dealt with under Constituency Parties or Branches.

2 (a) Book a hall to which the public is accustomed unless a centrally situated and commodious co-operative hall is available. Get the printing done by Co-operative printers, C.W.S., C.P.S., etc., etc. Show the printer that you are interested in his best work and seek his advice where in doubt.

Book a speaker who knows and will state the Party's case. Use the speaker—don't select a speaker who will use you. Get a Co-operator who will talk co-operative politics. Ask the speaker for his subject—for biographical details, and a photographic block for advertising.

Give yourself plenty of time to organise the meeting properly. Invite the co-operation of as many people as you can find jobs for in the organising work, so long as you are able to supervise effectively. Too many cooks spoil the broth, but too few may mean no broth at all.

Ensure the nucleus of an audience by roping in the auxiliaries and **organising** their attendance.

Appoint stewards and explain to them their duties **before** the meeting begins. Let them have a badge or other distinguishing mark so as to be recognised by the audience.

Arrange always for supplies of the latest party and other Co-operative literature. Display prominently. Sell literature in hall as audience is assembling.

Appoint a chairman and book choir or artists if musical items are proposed. See that the music is not out of harmony with the purpose of the meeting. Don't overcrowd the programme and "squeeze" the speaker in, but remember that each item and each speech are a necessary part of the meeting.

Avoid having posters which look like trading announcements and advertisements, especially if they are going to be displayed in shops.

Get the press interested. A local paper will often gladly accept a chatty paragraph about a speaker, or upon any matter of interest connected with the organisation of the meeting, especially if you are advertising your meeting in the paper.

The portable loud speaker in normal times is a good means of advertising a meeting.

In cold weather see that the hall is properly heated, otherwise audiences will turn shy.

Brighten up a dull hall by use of bunting, posters, rainbow flags, etc. A depressing hall affects speaker and audience.

Clear away from the platform chairs which will not be occupied. See that the table for speaker and chairman is prepared and arrange a long table in front of the platform to accommodate the Press—and see that the Press is informed of the meeting a week before it is held.

Have announcements of future meetings and of Party activities written out and any advertisement of these events posted where they can easily be read.

Always report afterwards to your Committee so that weaknesses may be remedied and any specially good features noted. It is useful to ask "Whom is the meeting arranged to attract?" If the answer is "everyone"—then only a well-known public figure will do—if a narrower section of the public is in the mind of the organisers, then take good care that every means of reaching that section is exploited and that the speaker is selected accordingly.

Are public meetings out of date? They may be out of fashion at a particular moment, and other methods of propaganda or of publicity may in a particular case be out of date, but as long as people assemble—and they do at cinemas, theatres and football matches—the basis of all public propaganda will remain. We must enter the field as a competitor for the crowds. There will be times and occasions when we shall compete successfully, and because we have something timely and urgent to say people will come to listen.

### SPEAKERS

Most parties treat speakers with consideration but a few might profit by a few hints.

- (1) Even if a speaker has been "booked" verbally write him immediately afterwards confirming the appointment.
- (2) Remind him of his (or her) engagement about a fortnight before the meeting and get to know his travelling arrangements.
- (3) Book accommodation for the speaker if he has to stay overnight. See that he is met at the station upon his arrival, especially at night, and that he has a meal if he has travelled any distance.
- (4) If the speaker has to return the same night provide at least some light refreshments before he leaves. A thermos flask for a hot drink, and some sandwiches may solve the problem.
- (5) Get to know the speaker's expenses before the meeting and have them ready before he leaves unless he has agreed to some other arrangement.
- (6) If there are musical items don't allow them to make the speaker late for his return train.

The following reminder sent to a speaker is a model for secretaries :

(1) PURPOSE.—The meeting which you have kindly agreed to address is to be a public meeting, the objects being : (a) to promote support for the main proposals of the Beveridge Report ; (b) to promote further interest in the national policy of the Co-operative Party and in the activity of this Society Party in particular.



(2) LOCATION.—The meeting will be held in the .....

(3) TIME.—The meeting will begin at 7-30 p.m.

(4) CHAIR.—The chair will be occupied by.....  
.....

President of this Society Party.

(5) PUBLICITY.—Bills and posters will be placed in as many of the Society's shops as possible and at other suitable places, for approximately fourteen (14) days immediately preceding the meeting.

(6) SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS.—Individual letters of invitation will be sent to the following, within the area of the.....Society :—

(a) Secretaries of **all** Co-operative Bodies and Auxiliaries, distributive, allied, productive, and joint ;

(b) Secretaries of all Trades Unions ;

(c) Secretaries of all Progressive bodies affiliated to the .....Trades Council, and Progressive political organisations.

(7) PRESS.—Mr.....  
will be invited to report the meeting for both the co-operative and the local papers.

(8) TRAVELLING.—For your information if required, convenient trains, between.....and .....  
....., **at/the time of writing**, are as follows :—

Depart .....	—	Arrive .....	—
		{ Via.....	Arrive —
„ .....	—	{ Depart .....	—
		{ Arrive .....	—
„ .....	—	„ .....	—

(9) If you will in due course please inform me of your expected time of arrival at.....Station, I will pass the information on to..... who will meet you at the station and arrange for whatever refreshment may be welcome to you. If desired as well, we will be glad to arrange accommodation for you overnight.

## CREATIVE PROPAGANDA

But listening to speeches is only one form of education and one of the most passive. Every kind of agency should be used to drive home the Party's message. Pageantry, drama, film shows, music should become an instrument for the presentation of the co-operative idea. All the ingenuity and resource of co-operative organisations should be mobilised behind our propaganda and education. Co-operators' Day should become the occasion not only for speeches, sports and displays of decorated vehicles, but for exhibitions and pageants which will thrill the public and invite the participation of great numbers of earnest and active co-operators.

In events of this kind the Co-operative Movement can remove the impression that it is a drab affair organised by the dull for the unimaginative. The Co-operative Party should take the initiative in local efforts to present co-operation as one of the most romantic, creative, and lively social force of our times. Even where the purely political aspects of co-operation are not presented, the Party stands to gain by deepening the loyalty of co-operators to their own Movement.

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## CHAPTER II.

### CONSTITUENCY PARTIES AND BRANCHES

A stagnant membership produces a stagnant party. A Society Party as soon as it has recruited a nucleus of membership should form a Constituency Party. The rules of the Constituency Party for which the Society Party is responsible under the Constitution of the Party should provide for:—

- (1) Basis of membership—who shall join!
- (2) Fee to be charged.
- (3) Definition of area of party.

- (4) Objects and duties.
- (5) Committee and Officials of Constituency Party—method of nomination and election—persons eligible.
- (6) Election of Candidates for submission to Party's local government panel.
- (7) Formation of Word Organisations or branches.
- (8) Frequency of Meetings.
- (9) Annual Meeting.
- (10) Amendment of Rule subject to approval of Society Party.

The Constituency Party under Sections B and C of the Constitution will be represented upon the Society Party and its representative should report back frequently. Resolutions dealing with party policy should be sent to the Society Party, and should not be sent to M.P.'s or other organisations except with the approval of the Society Party. Communications with Head Office should also be sent—and only be sent—through the Society Party, which acts in the name of the whole society and its units.

It is the special job of the Constituency Party to build up individual membership. For this reason we emphasise the value of appointing a **Membership Officer** whose duty it will be to look after existing membership and to increase it. His work needs to be planned and he (or she) requires to have recruiting agents supplied with membership forms, cards and literature for constant use, and he should report each month to the Party and make himself the pivot of party development. In each guild, in all committees, amongst employees and officials he should have someone always at work gaining new members and reporting to him.

The Party needs men and women as much as machinery. To neglect recruitment is to condemn the Party to death.

Distributing handbills and leaflets is not enough. Personal visits and personal invitations backed up by literature is the proper method of approach.

The Membership Officer with assistance from a small Membership Committee, can build up lists of co-operators to be visited and canvassed. He can be helped in this by Co-operative Insurance Agents, Branch Managers, Roundsmen, and Party members who shop at a particular store.

While the work should continue all the year round, periodically each Constituency Party should organise Membership Drives, say during one month in the Spring or Autumn. The Membership Officer should prepare a plan of campaign, and present it to the Committee of the Constituency Party and afterwards to the Party itself. He should put behind it drive and imagination. If the Party has a Literature Secretary this campaign should provide a splendid opportunity of selling a great number of Party publications. People will buy literature when the sale is properly organised and pushed.

Public Meetings are excellent rallying points, but it is in the homes of the people that literature can be sold more than at meetings.

In normal times a loud-speaker in the street and a party of literature sellers will get rid of hundreds of cheap pamphlets. A stall in a public market or wherever a crowd is assembled will produce results. This is a job in which youth can take its share. More dash, vigour and courage in selling out literature will attract people to our Party, as a party of action. Many local parties take advantage of the queues on 'divi.' days to sell pamphlets. The respect in which a party is held depends even more upon the sincerity and courage of its rank and file members than it does upon the public utterances of leaders. If the people know our members and respect them, they won't be scared by the bogey-members of scaremongering politicians. Get known by getting among electors and selling the Party's message.

More members—more literature sold ; more literature sold —more members.

Careful review of and reports upon each phase of party activity will prevent some vital activity being neglected or slurred over at a meeting. Each Officer should see that his department receives adequate attention at Constituency Party Meetings.

Whether you have parliamentary and local government candidates or not it is the duty of a Constituency Party to be able to influence both candidates and electors at every election. If you have an organisation with a large membership which is able to throw its weight on to the electoral field, the Party will be respected and its support sought. If you have not, then you may have sent delegations to every conference to which



you have been invited, and have passed numerous blistering resolutions at party meetings, without the slightest useful result.

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Properly organised social events are an asset to a Constituency Party and a source of financial support. A social should be a happy party event and a means of fellowship and enjoyment. It is a common view that these events rank well below public meetings and conferences in value. That depends entirely upon the thought given to the social side. Vary the programme to suit the tastes of young and old; have games, dances, and plenty of laughter, with a very short speech inviting people to join the Party, and a high level of enjoyment is reached. The Party member who looks upon these bright interludes in the life of the organisation as a necessary evil—the sugar to coat the pill—is on the wrong track. Make your party life as full of fun and happiness as you want the Co-operative Commonwealth to be. The Party must cater for the whole man.

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## CHAPTER III.

### EDUCATION

Schools and Conferences are one of the Party's chief means of educating members.

- (1) In planning have in mind the political topics of the day and book a speaker who will not use the occasion to put over policies which the Party has rejected.
- (2) Avoid unnecessary clashing of dates—make inquiries before and not after arrangements are almost complete.
- (3) If you have already had a number of recent schools let the speaker know what subjects have already been taken, or suggest subjects you would like him to take. Plan a series of subjects.
- (4) If possible provide tables for those who attend and wish to take notes.

Where the School or Conference is of national importance invite the National and especially the Co-operative Press to attend. In all cases invite the local press.



If you have a speaker who is rarely in the district invite neighbouring organisations, and if he has a particular pull with a special section of the community, invite that section.

Co-operate with your own Education Committee in the arrangement of schools. Arrange some separate and some jointly. The occasion of co-operation may be :—

- (a) The speaker is at home both on Educational and Political subjects.
- (b) The subject affects one committee as much as the other—e.g., Education, Public Health, Local Government Policy, etc.
- (c) Each Committee may wish to widen the appeal.

Parties either alone or in conjunction with the Education Committee may arrange Discussion Groups or classes to deal with subjects in a practical way, e.g. Local Government for members of Local Authorities and for Candidates, Public Speaking, Chairmanship, Party Organisation, Electioneering, etc. Sometimes a class conducted by the Education Committee would be unable to deal in a practical way with political subjects—how to make party speeches, how to run party candidates, how to administer party policy. Where the Education Committee is ready to help, well and good. For every vacancy in the ranks of Party officials we should have a good range of choice in selecting a successor, and we shall have this if we train party members.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### YOUTH

Where is the youth of to-day? Where shall we look for the leaders of to-morrow—two questions which provoke many different replies. The Party needs young men and women and who are already in sympathy with the broad principles of the Co-operative Movement, but if they are to graduate through the guilds and other adult organisations **before** we get them they are no longer youth! We must be on the look out for the product of the Youth Club, and the B.F.Y.C. which is an organisation with political objects. Younger local government and parliamentary candidates will be available only if we bring

youth into our local parties. Young people require the opportunity to make, and learn by making, their own mistakes. Those who are sober minded are often very very sober minded, and are more inclined to be attracted by the politically novel, than their older colleagues. The justification for a youth organisation is that young people can "have their fling" and make their mistakes without annoying or being annoyed by those who have grown more sober. In a political organisation young people must be trained to accept responsibility—let them understudy and assist party officials, occupy in constituency organisation positions which will keep them active and canalise their valuable enthusiasm. One of the most important things to remember is that while older people have "lost their illusions" younger ones have not, and are likely to be sickened off by constant sniping at leaders and wholesale suggestions of treachery and betrayal. Young people may less often hear of the virtues of colleagues occupying responsible positions, and conclude that leaders are not to be admired but scandalised, or that a movement which seems to produce so few worthy representatives of its own principles hasn't a lot in it. Young people should be made to feel that in our Movement they have the highest expression of their ideals and a full opportunity of serving them.

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## CHAPTER V.

### AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER BODIES

Our relations with the Labour Party are governed by the "Cheltenham Agreement" which reads as follows:—

#### NATIONAL

- "(1) That a joint sub-committee be established representative of both executives, with regular meetings and defined powers, subject to the confirmation of the two national executives.
- (2) That there be an exchange of the minutes of the two national executives.
- (3) That arrangements be made from time to time for joint campaigns on special subjects or during elections.

## DIVISIONAL AND LOCAL

- (4) That local Co-operative parties or councils be eligible for affiliation to divisional Labour parties.
- (5) That the basis of affiliation fees payable by local Co-operative parties or councils be agreed upon by the local organisations of the two parties, subject to the approval of the two national parties.
- (6) That the representation and voting powers of Co-operative parties or councils be in proportion to affiliation fees payable.
- (7) That Co-operative political councils or parties shall have similar rights and accept similar responsibilities as other affiliated organisations.
- (8) That the rights and responsibilities of affiliated bodies under this agreement in Scotland be similar to those granted to organisations in England and Wales.

It was agreed that this agreement be optional upon local Co-operative and Labour Parties, and not intended necessarily to interfere with existing arrangements where co-operative societies are already affiliated to the Labour Party or where an agreement has been established."

Before approaching a local Labour Party to open up negotiations the advice of Head Office should be sought as there are often local difficulties to overcome. Candidates for parliament and local government bodies run as Co-operative and Labour when they are nominated by the Co-operative Party, and this safeguard should be inserted in any local agreement. The amount of the affiliation fee and the number of delegates to be appointed by the local Co-operative Party have also to be agreed.

Parties should understand that for good reasons Society Parties as such should not affiliate, but only the individual members organisations, or Constituency units. The agreement is really an electoral and constituency arrangement and it is therefore the electoral units of the Party which should affiliate.

In certain cases the Labour Party has accepted an agreement providing for a local joint committee, with equal representation from both sides, to consider local elections and candidatures

and for the submission to the local Labour Party of nominations upon the same basis as affiliated organisations. This agreement is regarded as temporary and leading up to affiliation, and may be adopted only after it has been specifically approved by the two national executives.

Any serious difficulties encountered locally in the relation between the local Co-operative and the Labour parties should be referred to Head Office so that practical help and advice may be given.

In affiliating to a local Labour Party the local Co-operative Party does not surrender its right to do its own job and to carry out its responsibilities to the Co-operative Movement. Nor does the local Labour Party surrender its rights and responsibilities to its own affiliated organisations. Each party must do its own special work.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE WORK OF FEDERATIONS

The greater part of the country is now covered by Party Federations. Much of what has already been written about the problems of local parties applies to federations, but some problems are peculiar to them.

Federations are of two types—(a) Those formed in areas where there is already considerable party organisation—and (b) those formed in politically backward areas.

Under (a) it is the function of the federation to co-ordinate the activities of existing parties and to run special campaigns under the direction of the National Executive Committee. Societies and Co-operative auxiliary bodies affiliate to the federation through the local Society Parties or other units of the Party. An affiliation fee of so much per society party is fixed, though this is sometimes varied according to the number of organisations affiliated through the Society Party.

Under (b) the federation will work largely through auxiliary organisations, although some nationally affiliated societies will usually join. In an area where there is a substantial number

of societies affiliated nationally, but only one or two Society Parties, the federation will, in conjunction with the National Organisers, aim at the formation of more Society Parties and will so direct its propaganda. Where there is no local party, auxiliaries affiliate direct to the Federation.

There are still federations operating in areas where there are only a few societies affiliated nationally. Here the propaganda will aim at increasing national affiliations.

Propaganda alone is not enough ; there must be organised effort to achieve the different objectives.

Every federation recognises the value of the support of the auxiliaries in its work, and in any area where it is proposed to form a local party their assistance should be invited. Many Boards of Management, often mistakenly we think, await a substantial expression of local opinion before forming a Society Party. A federation may be looked upon by a Board of Management as an outside organisation. It cannot so regard the society's own auxiliaries. Federations should, if possible, first create interest in the Party through a Society's auxiliaries and get them to approach the Board of Management. But the auxiliaries should not go with empty hands—if they can take with them already completed cards of Individual Membership they have as many arguments as cards. Each federation should have a roll of individual members recruited only in areas where there is no local party.

Where Societies are not nationally affiliated local party organisation should be formed to bring this about and this is the work of the Voluntary Party. If a strong Voluntary Party is formed it will serve not only to create local interest in national affiliation but will provide the nucleus of a society party at a later date. Federations should have a Membership Officer or Organiser to specialise in the recruitment of individual members in the area and to form local parties. Every federation should plan its development in consultation with the National Organisers and should always consult them before arranging any interview with a Board of Management.

It is the duty of the Federation Executive Committee to keep under constant review the Party Organisation in its area and to have regular reports from its officers for this purpose.



## FEDERATION FINANCE

Federations receive an annual grant from the national funds of the Party in support of their work. To the maximum extent possible they should aim at making themselves self-supporting. This may not be possible in the most backward areas, but it should be achieved where there is substantial local party organisation. It must be remembered that the affiliation fee paid by societies to the funds of the national party is a small one, and does not compare with that paid by the trade unions to the funds of the Labour Party. An expansion of the activities of the national organisation of the Party, will fully absorb the funds now provided by societies. Federations should therefore develop to the fullest extent their own financial resources.

## CONSTITUENCY ORGANISATION

In the setting up of Society Parties under Section C of the Constitution federations can do effective work. In conjunction with the National Organisers they can bring together the several societies operating within a Parliamentary Constituency and combine them within a Constituency Party. The growth of party organisation in future largely depends upon the initiative taken by federations in applying this section of the constitution in appropriate circumstances.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCES

The Annual Conference of the Party is held over the Easter Week-end. Invitations to attend the Conference are sent out to all Societies, Management, Education, and Political Committees, Co-operative Parties, Federations, and all National Co-operative Organisations. Motions and amendments to motions may be submitted by all affiliated organisations, Political Committees, Co-operative Parties, Federations, and the National Committee of the Party. Conference is governed by Standing Orders which provide for the summoning of the Annual Conference or of a Special Conference, the submission of motions and amendments for the Agenda, the Election and rights of the Standing Orders Committee and the order of business and procedure at Conference.

## VOTING

Voting at the Annual Conference is on the following basis :—

- (a) Each distributive Society affiliated to the Co-operative Union shall have one vote. Each distributive Society affiliated to the Co-operative Party shall have one additional vote for each 1,000 members or part thereof on which it contributes payment to the Co-operative Party at the rate prescribed in the Constitution of the Co-operative Party.
- (b) Each Society or Organisation other than distributive affiliated to the Co-operative Party shall be given the number of votes to which it would be entitled as a distributive society on the subscription paid.
- (c) Each Federation of Co-operative Parties, each Society Co-operative Party and each Voluntary Co-operative Party shall be entitled to one vote.

The preliminary circular announcing the date and place of the Annual Conference is issued in November and it invites organisations to submit motions for the Agenda and announces the closing date for their submission. There is no need for parties to wait for the circular before drafting resolutions, since the Annual Conference is a fixture.

Motions for the Agenda are then printed in booklet form and sent to organisations usually some time in January. Amendments to the motions are invited and a closing date fixed for their receipt. Accompanying the booklet of motions for the Agenda is the form for the notification to Head Office of the appointment of delegates, and an application form for lodgings accommodation.

The final Agenda, the Annual Report of the National Committee, and any other Conference papers, including the Voting Cards, are circulated about a month before the date of the Annual Conference.

## STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

The Standing Orders Committee is composed of two representatives of the Party Executive Committee together with one representative from each of the following sections :—

- NO. 1 SECTION.—North-Western, Scottish, Northern.
- NO. 2 SECTION.—Midland, North-Eastern, Western.
- NO. 3 SECTION.—Southern, South-Western.

Group representatives are elected in rotation in the above order. In November of each year Societies, Parties, and Federations in the Sections entitled to nominate, receive a nomination paper and are informed of the closing date.

The Election takes place at the Annual Conference and a ballot paper is issued to those entitled to vote, upon presentation of the book of voting cards. Each organisation exercises the same voting power as it does on a "card vote" at the Conference. It is probable that voting will be by postal ballot in the near future.

Voting at the Annual Conference is generally by show of hands, but a card vote may be demanded by not fewer than thirty delegates.

In a "card vote," sometimes described as a "block vote," the value of each vote is the number of persons represented by the organisation casting it.

#### DUTIES OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

It is the duty of the Standing Orders Committee, subject to the approval of Conference, to determine the order of business coming before conference and in general to make arrangements for the expeditious conduct of business. Motions of a similar character are grouped and embodied in a composite motion so as to avoid duplicating debates on any particular subject, and to ensure that all issues are presented clearly to the delegates. The Standing Orders Committee has no power to make pronouncements upon the merits or demerits of motions which stand on the agenda, except to declare whether they are in order or not. It may, however, pass on to the delegates who come before it for interview, any information which may assist them to decide whether or no to proceed with their motion, and the form in which it should be presented to Conference. The Standing Orders Committee is the servant of the Conference as a whole, and stands behind the Chairman to secure equal treatment for "platform" and floor. It is, therefore, judicial as well as administrative.

#### EMERGENCY RESOLUTION

The object of an "Emergency Resolution" is to bring before Conference a motion upon a matter which is important, urgent and is not covered by some other motion on the Agenda.

Under Conference Standing Orders the support of twenty organisations with voting powers is required to promote such a motion unless it is recommended by the National Committee. Delegates of the interested organisations interview the Standing Orders Committee and submit their motion in writing, the Committee then decides upon its recommendation to conference. Attempts are sometimes made to use this provision to bring before Conference a motion which might very well have been placed on the original list of motions submitted by organisations. This, however, is an abuse of the privilege of introducing into Conference business which delegates have had no previous opportunity of discussing with their organisation. The right to move an Emergency Resolution is a privilege which delegates should protect against abuse.

### ANNUAL REPORT

The Report of the National Committee comes before the Annual Conference for approval. It is open to any delegate to ask questions, to make comments upon or to move the reference back of part or the whole of the Report. Where organisations require statistical information about anything mentioned in the Report it is considerate and wise to give notice to Head Office some time before the Conference so that full and exact information may be given to the delegates.

### ANNUAL SECTIONAL CONFERENCE

In each Section of the Union an Annual Conference of subscribing societies and affiliated organisations is held to hear a report of the National Committee representatives for the section. Originally the Conference was called to hear the representatives of the subscribing societies, but in recent years it has been the practice to have a report from the Sectional Party representatives also. Except in Scotland, where motions from affiliated organisations are invited, this is only business transacted at the Conference. Delegates are given the opportunity of putting questions, and making comments upon the report. It is usual to call these conferences a few weeks before the Annual Conference of the Party is held. A report of the Sectional Conferences is submitted by the National Organisers to Head Office and the attention of the Executive Committee is called to any matter of special interest raised by delegates or speakers.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## PARTY SUMMER SCHOOL

An annual event to which organisations look forward is the Summer School. The object of the school is partly educational and partly social. Lectures and studies are important, but so too are the recreational and social activities of the students. It is intended that the various aspects of the school life shall be a guide to the students in the organisation of their own parties. The lectures are planned to carry out a scheme of studies and to promote the exchange of opinions amongst the students. This side of the school life is organised by the National Committee and Staff of the Party.

The social life of the School, with the assistance of the School Chairman and Party Staff is managed by a Socials Committee elected by the Students. All kinds of new ideas for entertainment and mutual enjoyment are tried out. Here again some of the more serious minded students are a little puzzled to know what all this has to do with a political school. The whole thing is simply explained. Not only are students expected to enjoy their association, they are expected to study it and pick up ideas to take back with them to their own organisation. Much of the social activity is quite unrehearsed and yet a majority of the students will, sometimes to their own surprise, find themselves able to take some part in it. After a week at the School they learn how to run events like Mock Parliaments, Mock Trials, Play Readings, Sketches, Revues, Games, Socials and Dances, and they see by practical demonstration how to organise social events so that nearly everyone will play a part and few be merely spectators.

In arranging lectures the aim is to present the co-operative view of contemporary political problems, and to select other lecturers who are likely to deal with politics from a different angle.

A circular inviting applications for school accommodation is sent to organisations usually in April of each year.



## PART VII.

# Elections

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### CHAPTER I.

#### SELECTION OF PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES

All organisations affiliated to the Party have the right to submit nominations for the Panel of Parliamentary Candidates and may **at any time** exercise that right. Serious thought should be given before submitting a name, since the National Committee considers a nomination to imply that the person put forward is considered by the nominating body to be fit to represent the Co-operative Movement in the House of Commons. The fact that a person is proficient in an office he or she at present holds, is not in itself proof of fitness for a parliamentary seat. In addition it must be remembered that the Party is nominating a person in the hope that he may become a **Co-operative M.P.** Every person nominated should possess at least the following qualifications :

- (1) Be a loyal co-operator and active supporter of the Party and comply with the conditions laid down in the Constitution. (See Clause 13 in Section A or Clause 14 in Sections B and C.)
- (2) Be familiar with the principles, purposes, machinery, and methods of the Co-operative Movement. To defend Co-operative rights and interests he must have a good knowledge of the general business of co-operation.
- (3) He should have given practical evidence of his interest in the Movement by association with its organisations.
- (4) Have a sound grasp of political issues, particularly of those before the public.
- (5) Be able to express his ideas clearly before an audience. (The House of Commons is one of the most critical audiences in the world.) That is not to say he must

be an orator, but if he has no ability to express his views he will be a silent member even in Committee.

- (6) Be held in respect by other people for his sincerity and integrity.

All nominees are required by the National Committee to complete a questionnaire asking for particulars of public and co-operative service. Parties should always be on the look out for suitable nominees amongst co-operative officials and employees, as well as amongst the active elements of the Society's and Party's membership. Persons accepted for the Panel may with their consent be selected for nomination in any parliamentary constituency by a local Co-operative party.

Cases occur in which a party decides to nominate a person, not already on the Panel, to a Selection Conference in a Constituency and at that stage submits the name for the endorsement of the National Committee. Only in exceptional circumstances ought such a position to arise.

In all cases where a parliamentary vacancy occurs, or seems likely to occur, and a local party wishes to nominate a candidate, Head Office should be informed so that the situation may be examined even before likely nominees are considered or commitments of any sort made. Steps will immediately be taken by the National Executive Committee to consult with the local party and to advise upon nominees, nomination and selection procedure, finance and other questions involved in the promotion of a candidature.

Where more than one Society Party is interested in a constituency joint action should be taken before any nomination is placed before a Selection Conference.

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## CHAPTER II.

### FINANCE OF CANDIDATURE

The National Committee meets two thirds of the expenses incurred at a parliamentary election. Election expenses are by law limited to sixpence per elector on the register in County Constituencies, and fivepence in boroughs. These figures may shortly be reduced. The Labour Party does not permit its

candidates to spend more than 60 per cent. of the legal maximum, and requires the local Labour Party itself to meet at least 20 per cent. of the expenses of the election. Where this arrangement is operative the local and National Co-operative Party would bear the remainder of the expenses of a Co-operative nominee.

In Constituencies responsible for a Co-operative Candidature, the local party receives from the funds of the National Co-operative Party an annual grant (before the war £90—at present £50), towards the expenses of the Constituency, and an additional grant of £50 where a full time agent is employed at the recognised Trade Union salary.

At the time of the Selection of a Parliamentary Candidate it is usual for an organisation nominating a candidate to state what annual sum it will contribute towards the expense of the constituency and what amount or proportion of the election expenses it will contribute. This is embodied in a financial agreement between the candidate and the Labour Party, and is subject to stated limitations upon the amount of the annual grants.

A Co-operative Party nominee chosen by a Selection Conference, requires endorsement by the Executives of both the Labour and Co-operative Parties as the selected candidate "running in association with the Labour Party."

### JOINT COMMITTEE

Where a Co-operative Candidate has been selected at a Labour Selection Conference either side may request the formation of a Joint Committee for the Constituency to administer the funds provided by the Co-operative Party. The Joint Committee will consist of an equal number of representatives who have the right to select their own officials, and to appoint Joint Secretaries, one from each side.

A joint banking account is opened to receive the Co-operative contribution and the Joint Committee will authorise the payment of cheques, supervise the accounts and the spending of the money. The Committee may call for reports upon organisation and give advice upon constituency matters such as organisation and propaganda. Neither side surrenders the rights of its own organisation to carry out its normal functions in the constituency.

## CHAPTER III.

## RUNNING A PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

The Co-operative Union has a war time course of lessons called "Electioneering for Co-operators" which covers Parliamentary and Local Government Elections, and deals with pre-war Registration of Electors. Those who wish to go more fully into election procedure are advised to apply to the Education Department, Holyoake House, Manchester, for the lessons. We can only briefly summarise the general procedure in this section.

- (1) The candidate appoints the Election Agent and notifies the appointment in writing to the Returning Officer for the Election.
- (2) The Election Agent appoints in writing the Sub-Agents in a County Constituency and notifies (in writing) their appointment to the Returning Officer. He also appoints Committee Clerks, Messengers, Polling Agents, etc.
- (3) Election Agent books a Central Committee Room and Ward or District Committee Rooms, for the use of himself and his workers.
- (4) Election Agent or someone with his authority books halls for public meetings—the most urgent first, the latter including eve of poll meetings.
- (5) Election Agent obtains copies of the Register of Electors for writing up envelopes, canvass cards, etc.
- (6) Orders election envelopes bearing the words "Election Communication," usually two sets for electors, those to be sent by **free post** subject to regulation as to size. These should be ordered before an election if possible, and kept in stock, as they are required immediately the election campaign begins.
- (7) Candidate and Agent discuss Election Address and submit draft to Head Office for approval—makes arrangements for printing.
- (8) Election Agent meets all election workers with Candidate to create enthusiasm and inform workers of general lines of campaign.



- (9) Election Agent obtains nomination forms for candidate and makes arrangements for their completion.
  - (10) Writing of envelopes and canvass cards begin at earliest moment. Ward leaders arrange canvass with workers.
  - (11) Object of first canvass is a survey—to discover where support and opposition lie and general attitude of electors—to find out electors “removed,” etc.
  - (12) Election Agent should be assisted by following officers :—
    - (a) Meetings Officer—to book halls, speakers, and advertise meetings, etc.
    - (b) Canvass Officer—to supervise canvass and look after all returns.
    - (c) Transport Officer to arrange transport for speakers and to obtain free use of cars for Election Day.
    - (d) Women’s Officer—special efforts amongst women electors.
    - (e) A Co-operative Relations Officer to contact co-operators.
- If possible these officers should be stationed at the Central Committee Rooms.
- (13) Note there is not only a legal maximum to election expenses, but a legal limit on number of paid workers and committee rooms that are paid for.
  - (14) Candidates are entitled to one free postal delivery. Election Agent should discuss arrangements with the Postal Authorities.
  - (15) Election Agent should confer with candidate daily about campaign and use material obtained in canvass to advise candidate, e.g. reasons for opposition or support.
  - (16) Election address and good literature should be placed in envelopes for free postal delivery—one elector, one envelope. Post office by arrangement will return undelivered envelopes.
  - (17) See that addresses of persons removed are traced and literature delivered.

- (18) Work up election campaign to a grand exciting climax. On eve of poll candidate should deliver only short speeches at maximum number of meetings.
- (19) All literature should be ordered early and its distribution spread over campaign. Head Office Manifesto and Party election literature should be fully used.
- (20) See that co-operative support is canvassed and mobilised, the assistance of co-operative auxiliary bodies invited, and that co-operative platform support is obtained.
- (21) At a general election in the main only local speakers are available but at a by-election national speakers can be booked.
- (22) Give proper attention to the comfort and convenience of visiting speakers.
- (23) Issue Poll Cards—cards with name, address and register number of elector and polling station—during last week of campaign.
- (24) Thoroughly organise polling day arrangements for getting electors to the poll.
- (25) Make out a time table showing nomination day, polling day, date for issue of receipt of Absent Voters Ballot Papers, appointment of Counting Agents, payment of expenses, declaration of Election Expenses, etc. Leave no official notification until the last date, otherwise there will be no opportunity of rectifying mistakes.
- (26) Remember the Don'ts—the illegal and corrupt practices like treating, exceeding number of persons who may be employed, booking Committee Rooms on prohibited premises, providing ribbons, paying for cars to take voters to the poll, etc., etc.
- (27) The Election Agent should have some knowledge of Election and Electoral Law. For purposes of reference, Parker's "Election Agent and Returning Officer," price £3 3s., should be at his elbow. Mistakes made by the Agent are liable to heavy penalties and may eventually cost the candidate his seat even if successful at the election.
- (28) A study group might be formed by your party to train budding Election Agents and workers—with the aid of the Co-operative Union course previously mentioned.

## CHAPTER IV.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

The case for direct local government representation by the Party is a powerful one. Co-operative Societies are not merely trading organisations seeking representation in order to keep down the rates. They engage in educational, social welfare and political activities in order to express the co-operative ideal and to apply it to the life of the community. The Party looks upon the local authority as an association of citizens with the right to direct the organised life of the community in accordance with local needs and ideals. In nearly every community co-operative societies are amongst the largest consumers of publicly organised services, e.g., water, gas, electricity, apart from the individual consumption of co-operators. Not only is the co-operative society experienced in the management of business, but it knows a great deal about the planning of buildings, buying and selling of land, house ownership and management, enforcement of food and health regulations as applied to bakeries, dairies, etc. Its experience enables its public representatives to contribute handsomely to the management of the local council. Its interest in finance, accepting and directing the savings of the people, laying out its capital and resources to the best advantage, adds prudence to enterprise, and business capacity and judgment to its idealism. The knowledge of co-operative organisation and practice is therefore an excellent qualification for a public representative. A co-operative society not only conforms to the law, but in many cases leads the way in adopting standards of business service which only later become law.

In addition co-operative representatives are able to safeguard local societies against the prejudices of private-trader members of the local authorities. It has often happened that co-operative tenders for local authority contracts have been turned down on no other ground than prejudice against co-operative trading. Probably the local society includes 50 per cent. of the rate-payers of the district, but is ignored as a trading organisation in favour of a single ratepayer who is a private trader. Co-operative representatives on local authorities are expected on all occasions to act in the interests of the ratepayers and to use their special experience of business to the general advantage.

Local parties usually compile a panel of persons for nomination as local government candidates. All affiliated

organisations are invited periodically—each year in most cases—to submit names to the Society Party, and these are subsequently, after interviewing the nominees, placed on the Panel. Where there is an affiliation with the Labour Party the list is afterwards sent, either separately, or after inclusion on the Labour Party's own panel, to Ward organisations, for the selection of a candidate. Practice varies—in some areas the Ward Committee selects the candidate subject to the endorsement of the central body, in other cases the Central body itself "posts" the candidates to the various wards. Incidentally, under the Labour Party's Constitution the members of an affiliated organisation are entitled to become enrolled members of the ward organisation, and to attend meetings of the ward organisation.

Whether Co-operative Candidates at a local election are run entirely by the Co-operative Party or in association with the Labour Party, the co-operative origin of the candidature should be made clear to the electorate. The use of the hyphenated title "Co-operative and Labour" and the literature employed to support the candidate should ensure this.

At local government elections the office of Election Agent is not recognised in law ; but it is necessary to appoint someone to take charge.

One of the first duties of the clerk in charge is to obtain nomination forms, to get them completed and checked by the acting Returning Officer before Nomination Day.

Other official forms requiring to be returned are those appointing Polling Agents and Counting Agents. The Polling Agents visit the Polling Stations, according to the written authorisation issued by the Returning Officer, to satisfy themselves that the proceedings within the station are conducted properly, while Counting Agents attend the official count of ballot papers in the interests of the Candidate. A Declaration of Secrecy has to be made by Polling and Counting Agents and signed in the presence of a magistrate or of the Returning Officer.

Local Elections should be as well organised as Parliamentary Elections. The canvass of electors should be thoroughly done for the guidance of workers on Election Day. An

Election Address, sometimes combined with the Polling Card, is issued by the candidate. In fairly compact districts it is usual to book one Committee Room for receiving literature and to act as a centre for writing, etc., and one Committee Room in each polling district on Polling Day.

For certain types of local authority elections there is a legal maximum to expenditure, employment of paid clerks and messengers, number of committee rooms paid for, whilst a return and declaration of expenses is necessary. These questions are fully considered in the Co-operative Union Course on "Electioneering for Co-operators."

Local Co-operative Parties, generally speaking, meet the whole of the expenses of their local government candidates or a proportion agreed to after consultation with the ward organisation adopting the Candidate.

In any election, local or national, it should be the aim of the local co-operative Party to put into the field as workers as many active co-operators as possible, and to make it plain to all that the promotion of a co-operative Candidature brings new forces of support on to the electoral field.

## CHAPTER V.

### REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS

Before the war a new Register of Electors was compiled each year. Forms were issued to occupiers of premises calling for a return of all persons on the premises with a view to discovering :—

- (a) Persons over 21 years of age who would complete three months residence in that parliamentary constituency or in another entitling constituency, by the "qualifying date," 1st June.
- (b) Persons over 21 years of age who would complete three months as occupier or as the wife of the occupier of the premises on 1st June.
- (c) Persons having a claim for premises occupied for the purpose of business.



From these and other particulars furnished, together with the results of a canvass, Registration Officers, usually the Clerk to the Local Authority, prepared the Register of Electors.

The two main qualifications therefore were residence in the constituency for the period of three months before 1st June, or the occupation of household or business premises for a similar period.

The procedure for compiling an Annual Register has been suspended during the war, but under the provisions of an Act passed in 1943 the Home Secretary has been given the power, when paper and labour supplies are available, to compile a new register, and by a system of notification between the National Registration Officer and the Registration Officer for the Electors' Lists, to keep it up to date. When an Election is initiated the Register will be "frozen."

The qualifying period will be two months instead of three as it is now, and newcomers in a constituency will be automatically placed on the list as soon as qualified, instead of having to wait until a completely new register is compiled. Persons occupying business premises will have to apply to be placed on the Register for that qualification.

There will be an Absent Voters' Register which will consist mainly of service men and women, and persons on overseas service will be able to appoint proxies—that is someone to vote on their behalf.

If during war-time a general election takes place the National Identity Card, together with a declaration by the person concerned that he is the person referred to on the identity card, will become the title to a vote.

It is obvious that at least for some time after the war the Absent Voters' List will be a very important part of the Register of Electors. The political parties will pay a good deal of attention to the compilation of the various lists and will need to exercise constant supervision over the lists of newly qualified and no longer qualified persons. It will be the duty of Constituency Parties to appoint at least one person to take charge of this work and to familiarise himself with any Regulations (Statutory Rules and Orders) issued by the Home Office.

## CHAPTER VI.

## ELECTED PERSONS

The relations between elected persons and the Party they represent are often the subject of fierce local controversy. It is obviously the right of the Party to insist that its general lines of policy shall be loyally followed by elected representatives. The Party System ensures that the electorate shall be given a choice between policies whenever an election takes place. Whilst it is of the utmost importance that candidates placed before the electorate should, on their personal merits win the respect of the electorate, the governing factor should be the programme and policy advocated by the candidate. When a candidate invites the votes of electors, the Party which has selected him stands as guarantor behind his programme and pledges. It is, therefore, proper that the Party whose good name is at stake should be in a position to call to account and to influence the behaviour of its representatives. On the other hand an M.P., or local councillor who was not free, in consultation with his colleagues, to determine the best tactics to adopt in particular circumstances would become a robot not a representative.

An M.P. or local councillor usually joins a Group of members owing allegiance to the same political party as himself, and except upon matters of conscience agrees to accept the decisions of the Group on questions of party policy. The Group will have Standing Orders defining the rights and responsibilities of its members and providing for the election of officers—Chairman, Secretary and Whips.

## COUNCIL GROUPS

At local council group meetings it is customary to have one or two representatives of the local party Executive Committee with the right to speak but not to vote. This provides an opportunity for consultation between the Party and its representatives without interfering with the public responsibility of the representatives. An elected person should welcome every opportunity of consultation with his own party organisation and thus strengthen confidence in himself as the representative of a democratic movement. A co-operative representative will also find many opportunities of increasing his usefulness if he maintains close contact with the Committee and officials of co-operative societies, particularly in regard to questions of commerce, industry, and economics.

## PART VIII.

### CHAPTER I.

#### DRAFT STANDING ORDERS

We are often asked to suggest Standing Orders suitable for adoption by Society Parties. Following is a model set capable of adaptation to suit local circumstances.

- (1) Meetings of the.....Party shall be held on the third Thursday of each month at 7-30 p.m., except where otherwise determined by the Party or by the Party Executive Committee.
- (2) Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held on the first Thursday of each month at 7-30 p.m., or otherwise as determined by the Executive Committee.
- (3) All meetings shall be summoned by the Secretary and notices shall be sent to each member not less than seven days before the meeting.
- (4) Members of the Society Party and of the Executive Committee who are absent from three successive meetings without acceptable excuse shall forfeit their seats.
- (5) The Secretary shall keep a Record of Attendances of Members at meetings and shall send to each organisation a copy of the record prior to the appointment or re-appointment of delegates.
- (6) A Quorum shall consist of not less than one third of the members entitled to attend any Society Party or Executive Committee Meeting and no such meeting shall commence or continue in the absence of a quorum. In the event of there being no quorum present within thirty minutes of the time arranged for commencing the meeting, the meeting shall be abandoned.
- (7) The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and any other Executive Officer elected by the Party shall have the right to vote at all meetings of the Party and the Executive Committee, the Chairman having a second or casting vote.

- (8) The Annual Meeting of the Party shall be held in the month of ..... Six weeks before the date of the Annual Meeting all organisations entitled to be represented on the Society Party shall be invited to appoint their delegate or delegates, and to make nominations for the Officers and Executive Committee for the next year. Forms for these purposes shall be sent to organisations by the Secretary and be returned not less than fourteen days before the date of the Annual Meeting. The consent of persons appointed as delegates or nominated as officers shall previously have been obtained by appointing or nominating organisations.
- (9) Ballot papers for the election of Officers and the Executive Committee shall be issued and the vote taken at the Annual Meeting of the Party. Votes shall be counted by scrutineers appointed at the meeting and the result declared forthwith. In the event of a tie requiring a further vote such vote may, if the meeting so decides, be taken by show of hands.
- (10) Nominations of candidates for public office shall be invited in the month of ..... All nominees shall be interviewed by the Society Party, or if so decided, by the Executive Committee and shall satisfy the interviewing body of his or her fitness for such office. The Society Party shall afterwards decide by a vote for or against the endorsement of nominees, and voting papers shall be issued for the purpose in the following manner :

NAME OF PERSON NOMINATED	FOR THE NOMINEE	AGAINST THE NOMINEE
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- (11) An Agenda for each meeting shall be prepared by the Chairman and Secretary and shall take precedence over all other business.
- (12) Standing Orders may be suspended, upon a motion supported by a majority of the members present, to deal with a specified matter of urgency, upon the completion of which business the Standing Orders shall again operate. The motion must name the Standing Orders which it is proposed to suspend.



- (13) Every member shall stand when speaking and address the Chair, and must for the time being resume his seat if the Chairman intervenes in any matter.
- (14) The ruling of the Chairman on points of procedure shall be final, unless challenged by not less than four members, who upon a motion are supported by two thirds of the members present.
- (15) No members shall be allowed to speak more than once upon any subject before the meeting, unless in Committee, or on a point of order, or explanation, except the mover of the Original Motion. But on Amendment being moved, any member, even though he has spoken on the Original Motion, may speak again on the amendment.
- (16) If an amendment be carried, it displaces the Original Motion and itself becomes the substantive motion.
- (17) No motion or amendment which has been accepted by the Chair shall be withdrawn without the unanimous consent of the meeting.
- (18) The motions for next business, or the closure, may be moved and seconded only by members who have not previously spoken at any time during the debate. No speeches shall be allowed on such motions.
- (19) Any member who has not already spoken during the debate may move the adjournment of the question under discussion, or of the meeting, but must confine his remarks to that question, and must not discuss any other matter.
- (20) The voting shall be by show of hands, except where a ballot vote is otherwise specified.
- (21) Notices of motion shall be sent to the Secretary in writing not less than.....days before the meeting at which they are to be discussed. Such motions shall be placed upon the Agenda in the order in which they are received by the Secretary.
- (22) No resolution shall be rescinded or amended at the same meeting at which it is passed. ....days' notice of its rescindment or amendment must be given, but the resolution shall not be rescinded or amended unless by the consent of two-thirds of the delegates present at the meeting when it is considered.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE PARTY MUST DEVELOP

It is essential to the growth of the Co-operative Movement that it should have legal and economic freedom to expand. The greater the success of co-operative business the more enmity and opposition it is likely to arouse amongst its competitors. As a democratic and voluntary movement co-operation depends for its support and progress upon public opinion. But what people think about things is closely linked up with what things they think about. The capitalist press is sustained by great revenues derived from advertisements. Newspapers are for the most part owned by wealthy companies and run for the purpose of profit-making. They not only obtain the most substantial part of their income from profit-making concerns, but are themselves part of the profit-making system. The press and other agencies for creating public opinion will tend more and more definitely to ally themselves with the opponents of co-operation. We have more friends when there are nine million co-operators than when there are eight million, but we also have more strongly organised opposition to encounter. Hostility is not confined to business operations—it expresses itself in political attitudes.

The Co-operative Party has been entrusted with the political defence of co-operation, which represents the most positive economic achievement of democracy. The machinery of the State, national and local, is largely the creation of capitalistic governments, with some "trimmings" and improvements which are the result of democratic agitation and pressure. But the Co-operative Movement is supremely the creation of the People. It is above all a People's Movement which grows just to the extent that the social consciousness of the people grows. As soon as the citizen decides that he can no longer believe in capitalism as a social system, there to hand is the machinery of a better social system—the Co-operative Movement. He has not to wait for parliamentary majorities, for others to accept his own views, or for Acts of Parliament. He has immediate access to a system of People's Ownership. One of the most important of our tasks as a party is to impress upon democratic organisations the economic and political significance of the Co-operative Movement. To dream of future triumphs is easier than to win battles to-day. Democracy must be shown

that the instruments of victory are at its feet when they should be in its mighty hands.

The Co-operative Party must—

- (1) Help co-operators to appreciate the importance of the instrument they have created. This will in itself make clear why it is misrepresented and opposed by self-seeking profit-making organisations.
- (2) Mobilise the whole force of organised democracy in support of Co-operation.
- (3) Provide an adequate political defence for the Co-operative Movement and translate its principles into the language of politics.
- (4) Apply to our times and our problems the principles which have already been partially but successfully applied by co-operative organisations.

To do all this we must modernise, strengthen and extend the organisation of the Party. Only so can we play our part in a total effort to build a free, democratic, and co-operative future, only so can we fulfil the mandate entrusted to us by the Co-operative Movement.

# INDEX.

A.	PAGE NO.
Activities—Social .....	61
Auditor.....	23, 51-2
B.	
Banking.....	51-2
Board of Management.....	25-6
Britain, rebuilding.....	6
British Federation of young Co-operators.....	62
C.	
Candidatures .....	24, 73-4
Candidatures, finance of .....	73-4
Chairman .....	41-3
Chairman, duties of .....	42
Chairman, Vice- .....	43
Cheltenham Agreement.....	63
Committee .....	11-13, 37-8, 68-9
Advisory.....	12
Advisory, duties of.....	12
Executive .....	11-12
National.....	11-12
Scottish .....	13
Society Party Executive .....	37-8
Society Party, typical Agenda .....	37
Standing Orders.....	68-9
Conference .....	67-70
Annual.....	67-70
Report, Annual.....	70
Resolution, Emergency .....	69-70

# INDEX—continued

	PAGE NO.
Standing Orders Committee.....	68-9
Standing Orders Committee, duties of .....	69
Voting.....	68
Sectional, Annual.....	70
Constituency, organisation.....	67
Constitutions .....	21-2, 25-30
Section A .....	21, 25
Section B.....	21, 26-8
Section C .....	21, 28-30
General.....	21
Name .....	21
Objects .....	22
Local Party.....	21
Co-operative Auxiliaries.....	30
Relations with.....	30
Representatives.....	30
Co-operative Movement .....	9
Co-operative Party.....	86-7
Co-operative Union .....	13-15
Administration .....	14
Central Board .....	14
Congress.....	14
Congress and the Party .....	14
Sectional Boards.....	14
Sectional Contact .....	14, 15
Trade Associations.....	15
Correspondence.....	44-6
Filing .....	45-6
Council Groups.....	82

E.	PAGE NO.
Education.....	8, 61-2
Elections.....	72-82
Absent Voters' List .....	81
Council Groups.....	82
Elected Persons.....	82
Electors, Register of .....	80-1
Elections—	
Local Government .....	78-80
Parliamentary, running a .....	75-7
F.	
Federations .....	32-3, 65-7
Work of .....	65-6
Finance.....	67
I.	
Industry .....	7-8
Ownership and control.....	7-8
Principles of control .....	8
J.	
Joint Parliamentary Committee .....	15-17
Complement.....	16
Party association with.....	16
L.	
Labour Party, relations with .....	63-5
Local Government.....	8
M.	
Meetings .....	35-40, 53-6
General Procedure.....	35-6
Public, organising a.....	53-6
Society Party .....	38-40
Business Agenda .....	39-40
Election of Officials .....	40



# INDEX—continued

	PAGE NO.
Membership .....	9-10, 22
Affiliated.....	9
Fee .....	9
Representation.....	10
Rules.....	10
Subscription .....	9
Voting.....	10
Individual .....	22
Fee .....	2

## N.

National Co-operative Authority.....	17
National Council of Labour.....	18, 19
Objects .....	19
National Organisation .....	23

## O.

Officers.....	22-3
Eligibility .....	23
Officials, duties of.....	41-51
Organisation.....	20
Finance.....	20
First steps.....	20
Provision of funds.....	20

## P.

Parliamentary Candidates.....	72-3
Qualification .....	72-3
Selection.....	72-3
Parliamentary County Division.....	28-9
Parliamentary Group .....	17, 18
Parliamentary Joint Committee .....	74
Parliamentary Panel.....	24

# INDEX—continued

	PAGE NO.
Party.....	22, 25, 32, 34-40, 59-60
Constituency.....	22, 25, 59-60
Society.....	34-40
How to form a.....	34-6
Objections .....	35
Voluntary.....	32
Peace, world .....	6
Policy—	
Federation.....	33
Party.....	6, 19
Post war, immediate problems.....	7
Propaganda, creative.....	58
R.	
Records.....	47
Report, Annual.....	70
Resolution, Emergency.....	69-70
Rules.....	24
S.	
Secretary.....	43-4, 46-8
Full time.....	44
Society Parties.....	24
Speakers, treatment of.....	56-8
Standing Orders Committee.....	68-9
Standing Orders, duties of.....	69
Standing Orders, Draft .....	83-85
Summer School, Party .....	71
T.	
Treasurer .....	47-8
V.	
Voting.....	68
Y.	
Youth .....	62-3

